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"The Annunciation."

Part of the famous fresco by Fra Angelico in the Convent of St. Mark, Florence.

MODERN PAINTERS

BY

JOHN RUSKIN

A Volume of

Selections

THOMAS NELSON & SONS
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PREFACE.

JOHN RUSKIN'S *Modern Painters* has come to be regarded as his central and typical work, embodying his chief ideas on the study of Nature and its interpretation by the artist—using the term to include painter, sculptor, and poet.

The first of the five volumes of which this work consists was published in 1843. The complete title of the original edition ran as follows:—"*Modern Painters: their superiority in the Art of Landscape Painting to all the Ancient Masters proved by Examples of the True, the Beautiful, and the Intellectual, from the Works of Modern Artists, especially from those of J. M. W. Turner, Esq., R.A.*" This gives us a clear idea of the scope and purpose of the complete work. It was a burning exhortation to painters to throw aside tradition and to observe Nature afresh, each for himself, in the spirit of the humble disciple. It was clear that the Old Masters had not done so, and equally clear that the landscape artists of the writer's own day—Harding, Cox, Copley, Fielding, Prout, and others—had learned to look independently upon the workings of Nature; but it was most clear of all that Turner had given in his sketches and completed works the most perfect interpretation of Nature that had ever been accomplished by the hand of man.

The author was twenty-five years of age when the first volume of *Modern Painters* was published, and at the time he was strangely ignorant of early Italian painting. But before the appearance of the second volume he passed through a severe course of study, chiefly at Pisa, Florence, Verona, and Venice, embracing the whole of mediæval history and art, with special concentration upon the works of Titian, Veronese, Bellini, and Perugino. The second volume appeared early in the summer of 1846. "Its first great assertion," he writes in his preface, "is that beautiful things are useful to men because they are beautiful, and for the sake of their beauty only; and not to sell, or pawn, or in any other way turn into money. . . . It then proceeds to ask —What makes anything beautiful, or ugly, in itself? implying, therefore, that positive beauty and positive ugliness are independent of anybody's

taste. . . . I next enter on the main task of defining the nature of Beauty itself, and of the faculties of mind which recognize it and invent."

The third volume, which appeared in 1856, has been described as "one of the gems of *Modern Painters*." It continues the method of the two earlier books, but is described by the author as forming, in a sense, the epitaph of Turner. "The first and second volumes were written to check, as far as I could, the attacks upon Turner, which prevented the public from honouring his genius at the time when his power was greatest. The check was partially given, but too late; Turner was seized by painful illness not long after the second volume appeared; his works, towards the close of the year 1845, showed a conclusive failure of power, and I saw that nothing remained for me to write but his epitaph." The epitaph was of considerable length, occupying also Volumes IV. and V., which appeared in 1856 and 1860 respectively. In his preface to the concluding volume the author sums up his own work in the following words, which exhibit not only his original intention in undertaking his great task, but also the manner in which it had been modified by circumstances which arose during the seventeen years in which he was engaged upon it:—

"The first volume was the expansion of a reply to a magazine article; and was not begun because I then thought myself qualified to write a systematic treatise on Art; but because I at least knew, and knew it to be demonstrable, that Turner was right and true, and that his critics were wrong, false, and base. At that time I had seen much of Nature, and had been several times in Italy, wintering once in Rome; but had chiefly delighted in northern art, beginning, when a mere boy, with Rubens and Rembrandt. It was long before I got quit of a boy's veneration for Rubens' physical art-power; and the reader will, perhaps, on this ground *forgive the strong expressions of admiration for Rubens*, which, to my great regret, occur in the first volume.

"Finding myself, however, engaged seriously in the essay, I went, before writing the second volume, to study in Italy; where the strong reaction from the influence of Rubens threw me at first too far under that of Angelico and Raphael; and, which was the worst harm that came of that Rubens influence, blinded me long to the deepest qualities of Venetian art; which, the reader may see by expressions occurring not only in the second, but even in the third and fourth volumes, I thought, however powerful, yet partly luxurious and sensual, until I was led into the final inquiries above related.

"These oscillations of temper and progressions of discovery, extending over a period of seventeen years, ought not to diminish the reader's confidence in the book. *Let him be assured of this, that unless important changes are occurring in his opinions continually all his life long, not one of those opinions can be on any questionable subject true.* All true opinions are living, and show their life by being capable of nourishment; therefore of change. But their change is that of a tree—not of a cloud.

"In the main aim and principle of the book there is no variation from its first syllable to its last. It declares the perfectness and eternal beauty of the work of God; and tests all work of man by concurrence with or subjection to that. And it differs from most books, and has a chance of being in some respects better for the difference, in that it has not been written either for fame, or for money, or for conscience sake, but of necessity.

"It has not been written for praise. Had I wished to gain present reputation, by a little flattery adroitly used in some places, a sharp word or two withheld in others, and the substitution of verbiage generally for investigation, I could have made the circulation of these volumes tenfold what it has been in modern society. Had I wished for future fame I should have written one volume, not five. Also, it has not been written for money. In this wealth-producing country seventeen years' labour could hardly have been invested with less chance of equivalent return."

The conscientious reader who sets himself the task of reading the whole of *Modern Painters* finds it extremely difficult to follow the argument, for Ruskin was the very apostle of inconsequence, taking pleasure in digression, and as often as not displaying his greatest powers as a writer and a prophet when he has forsaken his main line of argument. In order to fix attention upon the central thought which runs through the whole of the five volumes, we give below a kind of conspectus of their contents.

VOL. I.—PART I. GENERAL PRINCIPLES.

§1. The Ideas conveyable by Art—namely, of Power, Imitation, Truth, Beauty, and Relation.

§2. Ideas of Power, including their dependence upon execution, with a consideration of the meaning of Sublimity.

PART II. OF TRUTH.

§1. General Principles respecting Ideas of Truth and their Relative Importance, with their interpretation in the works of Old Masters and Modern Painters, particularly Turner.

§2. General Truths, including Truths of Tone, Colour, Chiaroscuro, and Space, illustrated from Old Masters and Modern Painters, with insistence upon Turner's pre-eminence.

§3. Truth of Skies, including that of the Open Sky, and Clouds of the Upper, Central, and Lower Region, with a consideration of the effects of light as rendered by Turner.

§4. Truth of Earth, including that of the Central Peaks, the Inferior Mountains, and the Foreground, illustrated as above.

VOL. I.—*continued.*

§5. Truth of Water, as interpreted by the Old Masters and Modern Painters, particularly Turner.

§6. Truth of Vegetation, again comparing Old Masters and Modern Painters; followed by a chapter on Modern Art and Criticism, and concluding with a statement of the duty of the Press with respect to the works of Turner.

VOL. II.—PART III. IDEAS OF BEAUTY.

§1. Of the Theoretic (or Æsthetic) Faculty.

(*a*) A consideration of its Rank and Relations, and its connection with Sense Impressions.

(*b*) A discussion of the meaning of Typical Beauty, including Ideas of Infinity, Unity, Repose, Symmetry, Purity, and Moderation.

(*c*) A consideration of Vital Beauty in Nature and in Man.

§2. Of the Imaginative Faculty.

(*a*) An inquiry into the nature of the three forms of Imagination—namely, Associative, Penetrative, and Contemplative.

(*b*) The manifestation of these three forms of Imagination in the works of great painters, especially in those of Turner.

(*c*) A consideration of the nature of the Superhuman Ideal.

VOL. III.—PART IV. OF MANY THINGS.

(*a*) An inquiry into (1) the Real Nature of Greatness of Style; (2) False and True Ideal; (3) Finish; (4) the Use of Pictures; (5) the Novelty of Landscape; and (6) the Pathetic Fallacy.

(*b*) A consideration of Classical, Mediæval, and Modern Landscape respectively, including the "landscape" of the poets.

(*c*) An inquiry into the Moral of Landscape.

(*d*) The Teachers of Turner.

VOL. IV.—PART V. OF MOUNTAIN BEAUTY.

Dealing first with the Turnerian Picturesque, Turnerian Topography, Turnerian Light, and Turnerian Mystery; followed by a commencement of the task of "ascertaining as far as possible what the proper effect of the natural beauty of different objects ought to be on the

VOL. IV.—*continued.*

human mind, and the degree in which this nature of theirs, and true influence, has been understood and transmitted by Turner."

Beginning with Mountains, deals in turn with—A. The Materials of Mountains, under the headings of (*a*) Compact Crystallines; (*b*) Slaty Crystallines; (*c*) Slaty Coherents; (*d*) Compact Coherents; showing in each case the effect of physical environment on man. B. The Sculpture of Mountains and their Resulting Forms—(*a*) Aiguilles; (*b*) Crests; (*c*) Precipices; (*d*) Banks; (*e*) Stones. C. The Mountain Gloom and the Mountain Glory.

VOL. V.—PART VI. OF LEAF BEAUTY.

Dealing in succession with (1) the Bud; (2) the Leaf; (3) the Branch; and (4) the Stem, and comparing the treatment of leaves by representative artists to the advantage of Turner.

PART VII. OF CLOUD BEAUTY.

Dealing in turn with (1) Cloud Balancings; (2) Cloud Flocks; (3) Cloud Chariots; and (4) the Rain Cloud, under the title of "The Angel of the Sea." Illustrated as before.

PART VIII. OF IDEAS OF RELATION. First of Invention Formal.

Treating of (1) the various powers, conditions, and aims of mind involved in the conception or creation of pictures; (2) the choice of subject as well as of forms, and the modes of their arrangement. Illustrated in detail chiefly from the works of Turner.

PART IX. OF IDEAS OF RELATION. Second of Invention Spiritual.

(*a*) The various forms and schools of landscape.

(*b*) The Greek, Venetian, and German methods of dealing with the dark mystery of life.

(*c*) Contrast between the boyhood of Salvator and Turner.

(*d*) A detailed examination of certain representative pictures by Turner.

(*e*) A final impassioned vindication of the great artist of whom Modern Painters may fitly be described as the apotheosis.

The compiler of this volume of selections has endeavoured to show in the above rough analysis that the work of Turner is the connecting link through all the apparent inconsequence and digression. "This is the way to look upon Nature," Ruskin says in effect, "to see God in Nature, and to study Man in his relationship to Nature and to Nature's God. The right method has been consistently followed by one painter only—namely, Turner."

The following collection of readings from the five volumes of *Modern Painters* is intended for those who are not art students in the technical sense of the term, but who are interested in Ruskin's views on the study of Nature; who wish to set about learning one of the hardest lessons of the progress to culture—how to look at great pictures in such a manner that the full meaning of the artist is unmistakably and clearly discerned; and who are further interested in Ruskin's consistent and passionate vindication of Turner in the face of the most virulent and damaging criticism.

The compiler has endeavoured to make his selection in such a manner as to exhibit in rough outline the writer's consistent purpose, and yet to make each reading, as far as possible under the circumstances, complete in itself, each embodying a definite idea or set of ideas capable of being illustrated from the experience of any person whose eyes and heart are open to the impressions of Nature and of the best artistic productions of brush and pen. The aim of this volume is to encourage the reader to study Ruskin's complete work.

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READINGS

FROM

MODERN PAINTERS.

VOLUME I.

1. The Value of Public Opinion.

IF it be true, and it can scarcely be disputed, that nothing has been for centuries consecrated by public admiration, without possessing in a high degree some kind of sterling excellence, it is not because the average intellect and feeling of the majority of the public are competent in any way to distinguish what is really excellent, but because all erroneous opinion is inconsistent, and all ungrounded opinion transitory; so that, while the fancies and feelings which deny deserved honour and award what is undue have neither root nor strength sufficient to maintain consistent testimony for a length of time, the opinions formed on right grounds by those few who are in reality competent judges, being necessarily stable, communicate themselves gradually from mind to mind, descending lower as they extend wider, until they leaven the whole lump, and rule by absolute authority, even where the grounds and reasons for them cannot be understood. On this gradual victory of what is consistent over what is vacillating, depends the reputation of all that is highest in art and literature; for it is an insult to what is

really great in either, to suppose that it in any way addresses itself to mean or uncultivated faculties.

It is a matter of the simplest demonstration, that no man can be really appreciated but by his equal or superior. His inferior may over-estimate him, in enthusiasm; or, as is more commonly the case, degrade him, in ignorance; but he cannot form a grounded and just estimate. Without proving this, however, which would take more space to do than I can spare, it is sufficiently evident that there is no process of amalgamation by which opinions, wrong individually, can become right merely by their multitude.[1] If I stand by a picture in the Academy, and hear twenty persons in succession admiring some paltry piece of mechanism or imitation, in the lining of a cloak, or the satin of a slipper, it is absurd to tell me that they reprobate collectively what they admire individually: or, if they pass with apathy by a piece of the most noble conception or most perfect truth, because it has in it no tricks of the brush nor grimace of expression, it is absurd to tell me that they collectively respect what they separately scorn, or that the feelings and knowledge of such judges, by any length of time or comparison of ideas, could come to any right conclusion with respect to what is really high in art. The question is not decided by them, but for them;—decided at first by few: by fewer in proportion as the merits of the work are of a higher order. From these few the decision is communicated to the number next below them in rank of mind, and by these again to a wider and lower circle; each rank being so far cognizant of the superiority of that above it, as to receive its decision with respect; until, in process of time, the right and consistent opinion is communicated to all, and held by all as a matter of faith, the more positively in proportion as the grounds of it are less perceived.[2]

[1] The opinion of a majority is right only when it is more probable, with each individual, that he should be right than that he should be wrong, as in the case of a jury. Where it is more probable, with respect to each individual, that he should be wrong than right, the opinion of the minority is the true one. Thus it is in art.

[2] There are, however, a thousand modifying circumstances which render this process sometimes unnecessary—sometimes rapid and certain—sometimes impossible. It is unnecessary in rhetoric and the drama,

But when this process has taken place, and the work has become sanctified by time in the minds of men, it is impossible that any new work of equal merit can be impartially compared with it, except by minds not only educated and generally capable of appreciating merit, but strong enough to shake off the weight of prejudice and association, which

because the multitude is the only proper judge of those arts whose end is to move the multitude (though more is necessary to a fine play than is essentially dramatic, and it is only of the dramatic part that the multitude are cognizant). It is unnecessary, when, united with the higher qualities of a work, there are appeals to universal passion, to all the faculties and feelings which are general in man as an animal. The popularity is then as sudden as it is well grounded,—it is hearty and honest in every mind, but it is based in every mind on a different species of excellence. Such will often be the case with the noblest works of literature. Take Don Quixote for example. The lowest mind would find in it perpetual and brutal amusement in the misfortunes of the knight, and perpetual pleasure in sympathy with the squire. A mind of average feeling would perceive the satirical meaning and force of the book, would appreciate its wit, its elegance, and its truth. But only elevated and peculiar minds discover, in addition to all this, the full moral beauty of the love and truth which are the constant associates of all that is even most weak and erring in the character of its hero, and pass over the rude adventure and scurrile jest in haste—perhaps in pain, to penetrate beneath the rusty corslet, and catch from the wandering glance, the evidence and expression of fortitude, self-devotion, and universal love. So again, with the works of Scott and Byron: popularity was as instant as it was deserved, because there is in them an appeal to those passions which are universal in all men, as well as an expression of such thoughts as can be received only by the few. But they are admired by the majority of their advocates for the weakest parts of their works, as a popular preacher by the majority of his congregation for the worst part of his sermon.

The process is rapid and certain, when, though there may be little to catch the multitude at once, there is much which they can enjoy when their attention is authoritatively directed to it. So rests the reputation of Shakspeare. No ordinary mind can comprehend wherein his undisputed superiority consists, but there is yet quite as much to amuse, thrill, or excite—quite as much of what is in the strict sense of the word, dramatic, in his works as in any one's else. They were received, therefore, when first written, with average approval, as works of common merit: but when the high decision was made, and the circle spread, the public took up the hue and cry conscientiously enough. Let them have daggers, ghosts, clowns, and kings, and with such real and definite sources of enjoyment, they will take the additional trouble to learn half-a-dozen quotations, without understanding them, and admit the supe-

invariably incline them to the older favourite. It is much easier, says Barry, to repeat the character recorded of Phidias, than to investigate the merits of Agasias. And when, as peculiarly in the case of painting, much knowledge of what is technical and practical is necessary to a right judgment, so that those alone are competent to pronounce a true verdict who are themselves the persons to be judged, and who therefore can give no opinion, centuries may elapse before fair comparison can be made between two artists of different ages: while the patriarchal excellence exercises during the interval a tyrannical—perhaps, even a blighting influence over the minds, both of the public and of those to whom, properly understood, it should serve for a guide and example. In no city of Europe where art is a subject of attention, are its prospects so hopeless, or its pursuit so resultless, as in Rome; because there, among all students, the authority of their predecessors in art is supreme and without appeal, and the mindless copyist studies Raffaelle, but not what Raffaelle studied.

It thus becomes the duty of every one capable of demonstrating any definite points of superiority in modern art, and who is in á position in which his doing so will not be

riority of Shakspeare without further demur. Nothing, perhaps, can more completely demonstrate the total ignorance of the public of all that is great or valuable in Shakspeare than their universal admiration of Maclise's Hamlet.

The process is impossible when there is in the work nothing to attract and something to disgust the vulgar mind. Neither their intrinsic excellence, nor the authority of those who can judge of it, will ever make the poems of Wordsworth or George Herbert popular, in the sense in which Scott and Byron are popular, because it is to the vulgar a labour instead of a pleasure to read them; and there are parts in them which to such judges cannot but be vapid or ridiculous. Most works of the highest art—those of Raffaelle, M. Angelo, or Da Vinci—stand as Shakspeare does, that which is commonplace and feeble in their excellence being taken for its essence by the uneducated, imagination assisting the impression (for we readily fancy that we feel, when feeling is a matter of pride or conscience), and affectation and pretension increasing the noise of the rapture, if not its degree. Giotto, Orgagna, Angelico, Perugino, stand, like George Herbert, only with the few. Wilkie becomes popular, like Scott, because he touches passions which all feel, and expresses truths which all can recognize.

ungraceful, to encounter without hesitation whatever opprobrium may fall upon him from the necessary prejudice even of the most candid minds, and from the far more virulent opposition of those who have no hope of maintaining their own reputation for discernment but in the support of that kind of consecrated merit which may be applauded without an inconvenient necessity for reasons. It is my purpose, therefore, believing that there are certain points of superiority in modern artists, and especially in one or two of their number, which have not yet been fully understood, except by those who are scarcely in a position admitting the declaration of their conviction, to institute a close comparison between the great works of ancient and modern landscape art, to raise, as far as possible, the deceptive veil of imaginary light through which we are accustomed to gaze upon the patriarchal work, and to show the real relations, whether favourable or otherwise, subsisting between it and our own I am fully aware that this is not to be done lightly or rashly; that it is the part of every one proposing to undertake such a task, strictly to examine, with prolonged doubt and severe trial, every opinion in any way contrary to the sacred verdict of time, and to advance nothing which does not, at least in his own conviction, rest on surer ground than mere feeling or taste.

2. Greatness in Art.

Painting, or art generally, as such, with all its technicalities, difficulties, and particular ends, is nothing but a noble and expressive language, invaluable as the vehicle of thought, but by itself, nothing. He who has learned what is commonly considered the whole art of painting, that is, the art of representing any natural object faithfully, has as yet only learned the language by which his thoughts are to be expressed. He has done just as much towards being that which we ought to respect as a great painter, as a man who has learned how to express himself grammatically and melodiously has towards being a great poet. The language is,

indeed, more difficult of acquirement in the one case than in the other, and possesses more power of delighting the sense, while it speaks to the intellect, but it is, nevertheless, nothing more than language, and all those excellences which are peculiar to the painter as such, are merely what rhythm, melody, precision and force are in the words of the orator and the poet, necessary to their greatness, but not the tests of their greatness. It is not by the mode of representing and saying, but by what is represented and said, that the respective greatness either of the painter or the writer is to be finally determined.

Speaking with strict propriety, therefore, we should call a man a great painter only as he excelled in precision and force in the language of lines, and a great versifier, as he excelled in precision or force in the language of words. A great poet would then be a term strictly, and in precisely the same sense applicable to both, if warranted by the character of the images or thoughts which each in their respective languages conveyed.

Take, for instance, one of the most perfect poems or pictures (I use the words as synonymous) which modern times have seen:—the "Old Shepherd's Chief-mourner." Here the exquisite execution of the glossy and crisp hair of the dog, the bright sharp touching of the green bough beside it, the clear painting of the wood of the coffin and the folds of the blanket, are language—language clear and expressive in the highest degree. But the close pressure of the dog's breast against the wood, the convulsive clinging of the paws, which has dragged the blanket off the trestle, the total powerlessness of the head laid, close and motionless, upon its folds, the fixed and tearful fall of the eye in its utter hopelessness, the rigidity of repose which marks that there has been no motion nor change in the trance of agony since the last blow was struck on the coffin-lid, the quietness and gloom of the chamber, the spectacles marking the place where the Bible was last closed, indicating how lonely has been the life—how unwatched the departure of him who is now laid solitary in his sleep;—these are all thoughts—thoughts by which the picture is separated at once from hundreds of equal merit, as

far as mere painting goes, by which it ranks as a work of high art, and stamps its author, not as the neat imitator of the texture of a skin, or the fold of a drapery, but as the Man of Mind.

It is not, however, always easy, either in painting or literature, to determine where the influence of language stops, and where that of thought begins. Many thoughts are so dependent upon the language in which they are clothed, that they would lose half their beauty if otherwise expressed. But the highest thoughts are those which are least dependent on language, and the dignity of any composition and praise to which it is entitled are in exact proportion to its independency of language or expression. A composition is indeed usually most perfect, when to such intrinsic dignity is added all that expression can do to attract and adorn; but in every case of supreme excellence this all becomes as nothing. We are more gratified by the simplest lines or words which can suggest the idea in its own naked beauty, than by the robe or the gem which conceal while they decorate; we are better pleased to feel by their absence how little they could bestow, than by their presence how much they can destroy.

There is therefore a distinction to be made between what is ornamental in language and what is expressive. That part of it which is necessary to the embodying and conveying the thought is worthy of respect and attention as necessary to excellence, though not the test of it. But that part of it which is decorative has little more to do with the intrinsic excellence of the picture than the frame or the varnishing of it. And this caution in distinguishing between the ornamental and the expressive is peculiarly necessary in painting; for in the language of words it is nearly impossible for that which is not expressive to be beautiful, except by mere rhythm or melody, any sacrifice to which is immediately stigmatized as error. But the beauty of mere language in painting is not only very attractive and entertaining to the spectator, but requires for its attainment no small exertion of mind and devotion of time by the artist. Hence, in art, men have frequently fancied that they were becoming rhetoricians and poets when they were only learning to speak melodiously,

and the judge has over and over again advanced to the honour of authors those who were never more than ornamental writing-masters.

Most pictures of the Dutch school, for instance, excepting always those of Rubens, Vandyke, and Rembrandt, are ostentatious exhibitions of the artist's power of speech, the clear and vigorous elocution of useless and senseless words; while the early efforts of Cimabue and Giotto are the burning messages of prophecy, delivered by the stammering lips of infants. It is not by ranking the former as more than mechanics, or the latter as less than artists, that the taste of the multitude, always awake to the lowest pleasures which art can bestow, and blunt to the highest, is to be formed or elevated. It must be the part of the judicious critic carefully to distinguish what is language, and what is thought, and to rank and praise pictures chiefly for the latter, considering the former as a totally inferior excellence, and one which cannot be compared with nor weighed against thought in any way, nor in any degree whatsoever. The picture which has the nobler and more numerous ideas, however awkwardly expressed, is a greater and a better picture than that which has the less noble and less numerous ideas, however beautifully expressed. No weight, nor mass nor beauty of execution can outweigh one grain or fragment of thought. Three penstrokes of Raffaelle are a greater and a better picture than the most finished work that ever Carlo Dolci polished into inanity. A finished work of a great artist is only better than its sketch, if the sources of pleasure belonging to colour and realization—valuable in themselves—are so employed as to increase the impressiveness of the thought. But if one atom of thought has vanished, all colour, all finish, all execution, all ornament, are too dearly bought. Nothing but thought can pay for thought, and the instant that the increasing refinement or finish of the picture begins to be paid for by the loss of the faintest shadow of an idea, that instant all refinement or finish is an excrescence, and a deformity.

Yet although in all our speculations on art, language is thus to be distinguished from, and held subordinate to, that which it conveys, we must still remember that there are

certain ideas inherent in language itself, and that strictly speaking, every pleasure connected with art has in it some reference to the intellect. The mere sensual pleasure of the eye, received from the most brilliant piece of colouring, is as nothing to that which it receives from a crystal prism, except as it depends on our perception of a certain meaning and intended arrangement of colour, which has been the subject of intellect. Nay, the term idea, according to Locke's definition of it, will extend even to the sensual impressions themselves as far as they are "things which the mind occupies itself about in thinking;" that is, not as they are felt by the eye only, but as they are received by the mind through the eye.

So that, if I say that the greatest picture is that which conveys to the mind of the spectator the greatest number of the greatest ideas, I have a definition which will include as subjects of comparison every pleasure which art is capable of conveying. If I were to say, on the contrary, that the best picture was that which most closely imitated nature, I should assume that art could only please by imitating nature; and I should cast out of the pale of criticism those parts of works of art which are not imitative, that is to say, intrinsic beauties of colour and form, and those works of art wholly, which, like the Arabesques of Raffaelle in the Loggias, are not imitative at all. Now I want a definition of art wide enough to include all its varieties of aim: I do not say therefore that the art is greatest which gives most pleasure, because perhaps there is some art whose end is to teach, and not to please. I do not say that the art is greatest which teaches us most, because perhaps there is some art whose end is to please, and not to teach. I do not say that the art is greatest which imitates best, because perhaps there is some art whose end is to create, and not to imitate. But I say that the art is greatest, which conveys to the mind of the spectator, by any means whatsoever, the greatest number of the greatest ideas; and I call an idea great in proportion as it is received by a higher faculty of the mind, and as it more fully occupies, and in occupying, exercises and exalts, the faculty by which it is received.

If this then be the definition of great art, that of a great artist naturally follows. He is the greatest artist who has embodied, in the sum of his works, the greatest number of the greatest ideas.

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3. The Beautiful.

ANY material object which can give us pleasure in the simple contemplation of its outward qualities, without any direct and definite exertion of the intellect, I call in some way, or in some degree, beautiful. Why we receive pleasure from some forms and colours, and not from others, is no more to be asked or answered than why we like sugar and dislike wormwood. The utmost subtlety of investigation will only lead us to ultimate instincts and principles of human nature, for which no further reason can be given than the simple will of the Deity that we should be so created. We may, indeed, perceive as far as we are acquainted with His nature, that we have been so constructed as, when in a healthy and cultivated state of mind, to derive pleasure from whatever things are illustrative of that nature; but we do not receive pleasure from them *because* they are illustrative of it, nor from any perception that they are illustrative of it, but instinctively and necessarily, as we derive sensual pleasure from the scent of a rose. On these primary principles of our nature, education and accident operate to an unlimited extent; they may be cultivated or checked, directed or diverted, gifted by right guidance with the most acute and faultless sense, or subjected by neglect to every phase of error and disease. He who has followed up these natural laws of aversion and desire, rendering them more and more authoritative by constant obedience, so as to derive pleasure always from that which God originally intended should give him pleasure, and who derives the greatest possible sum of pleasure from any given object, is a man of taste.

This, then, is the real meaning of this disputed word. Perfect taste is the faculty of receiving the greatest possible pleasure from those material sources which are attractive

to our moral nature in its purity and perfection. He who receives little pleasure from these sources, wants taste; he who receives pleasure from any other sources, has false or bad taste.

And it is thus that the term "taste" is to be distinguished from that of "judgment," with which it is constantly confounded. Judgment is a general term, expressing definite action of the intellect, and applicable to every kind of subject which can be submitted to it. There may be judgment of congruity, judgment of truth, judgment of justice, and judgment of difficulty and excellence. But all these exertions of the intellect are totally distinct from taste, properly so called, which is the instinctive and instant preferring of one material object to another without any obvious reason, except that it is proper to human nature in its perfection so to do.

Observe, however, I do not mean by excluding direct exertion of the intellect from ideas of beauty, to assert that beauty has no effect upon, nor connection with the intellect. All our moral feelings are so inwoven with our intellectual powers, that we cannot affect the one without in some degree addressing the other; and in all high ideas of beauty, it is more than probable that much of the pleasure depends on delicate and untraceable perceptions of fitness, propriety, and relation, which are purely intellectual, and through which we arrive at our noblest ideas of what is commonly and rightly called "intellectual beauty." But there is yet no immediate *exertion* of the intellect; that is to say, if a person receiving even the noblest ideas of simple beauty be asked *why* he likes the object exciting them, he will not be able to give any distinct reason, nor to trace in his mind any formed thought, to which he can appeal as a source of pleasure. He will say that the thing gratifies, fills, hallows, exalts his mind, but he will not be able to say why, or how. If he can, and if he can show that he perceives in the object any expression of distinct thought, he has received more than an idea of beauty—it is an idea of relation.

Ideas of beauty are among the noblest which can be presented to the human mind, invariably exalting and puri-

fying it according to their degree; and it would appear that we are intended by the Deity to be constantly under their influence, because there is not one single object in nature which is not capable of conveying them, and which, to the rightly perceiving mind, does not present an incalculably greater number of beautiful than of deformed parts; there being in fact scarcely anything, in pure, undiseased nature, like positive deformity, but only degrees of beauty, or such slight and rare points of permitted contrast as may render all around them more valuable by their opposition—spots of blackness in creation, to make its colours felt.

But although everything in nature is more or less beautiful, every species of object has its own kind and degree of beauty; some being in their own nature more beautiful than others, and few, if any, individuals possessing the utmost degree of beauty of which the species is capable. This utmost degree of specific beauty, necessarily coexistent with the utmost perfection of the object in other respects, is the ideal of the object.

Ideas of beauty, then, be it remembered, are the subjects of moral, but not of intellectual perception. By the investigation of them we shall be led to the knowledge of the ideal subjects of art.

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4. The Sublime.

I AM fully prepared to allow of much ingenuity in Burke's theory of the sublime, as connected with self-preservation. There are few things so great as death; and there is perhaps nothing which banishes all littleness of thought and feeling in an equal degree with its contemplation. Everything, therefore, which in any way points to it, and, therefore, most dangers and powers over which we have little control, are in some degree sublime. But it is not the fear, observe, but the contemplation of death; not the instinctive shudder and struggle of self-preservation, but the deliberate measurement of the doom, which are really great or sublime in feeling. It is not while we shrink, but while we defy, that we receive

or convey the highest conceptions of the fate. There is no sublimity in the agony of terror. Whether do we trace it most in the cry to the mountains: "fall on us," and to the hills: "cover us," or in the calmness of the prophecy: "And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh I shall see God"?

A little reflection will easily convince any one, that so far from the feelings of self-preservation being necessary to the sublime, their greatest action is totally destructive of it; and that there are few feelings less capable of its perception than those of a coward. But the simple conception or idea of greatness of suffering or extent of destruction is sublime, whether there be any connection of that idea with ourselves or not. If we were placed beyond the reach of all peril or pain, the perception of these agencies in their influence on others would not be less sublime; not because peril or pain are sublime in their own nature, but because their contemplation, exciting compassion or fortitude, elevates the mind, and renders meanness of thought impossible.

Beauty is not so often felt to be sublime; because, in many kinds of purely material beauty there is some truth in Burke's assertion, that "littleness" is one of its elements. But he who has not felt that there may be beauty without littleness, and that such beauty is a source of the sublime, is yet ignorant of the meaning of the ideal in art.

I do not mean, in tracing the source of the sublime to greatness, to hamper myself with any fine-spun theory. I take the widest possible ground of investigation, that sublimity is found wherever anything elevates the mind; that is, wherever it contemplates anything above itself, and perceives it to be so. This is the simple philological signification of the word derived from *sublimis;* and will serve us much more easily, and be a far clearer and more evident ground of argument than any mere metaphysical or more limited definition; while the proof of its justness will be naturally developed by its application to the different branches of art.

5. The Artist's Environment.

It is a fact more universally acknowledged than enforced or acted upon, that all great painters, of whatever school, have been great only in their rendering of what they had seen and felt from early childhood; and that the greatest among them have been the most frank in acknowledging this their inability to treat anything successfully but that with which they had been familiar. The Madonna of Raffaelle was born on the Urbino mountains, Ghirlandajo's is a Florentine, Bellini's a Venetian; there is not the slightest effort on the part of any one of these great men to paint her as a Jewess.

It is not the place here to insist farther on a point so simple and so universally demonstrable. Expression, character, types of countenance, costume, colour, and accessories are, with all great painters whatsoever, those of their native land, and that frankly and entirely, without the slightest attempt at modification; and I assert fearlessly that it is impossible that it should ever be otherwise, and that no man ever painted or ever will paint anything but what he has early and long seen, early and long felt, and early and long loved.

How far it is possible for the mind of one nation or generation to be healthily modified and taught by the work of another, I presume not to determine; but it depends upon whether the energy of the mind which receives the instruction be sufficient, while it takes out of what it feeds upon that which is universal and common to all nature, to resist all warping from national or temporary peculiarities. Nicolo Pisano got nothing but good, the modern French nothing but evil, from the study of the antique; but Nicolo Pisano had a God and a character. All artists who have attempted to assume, or in their weakness have been affected by, the national peculiarities of other times and countries, have instantly, whatever their original power, fallen to third-rate rank, or fallen altogether, and have invariably lost their birthright and blessing; lost their power over the human heart, lost all capability of teaching or benefiting others.

English artists are usually entirely ruined by residence in Italy; but for this there are collateral causes which it is not here the place to examine. Be this as it may, and whatever success may be attained in pictures of slight and unpretending aim, of genre, as they are called, in the rendering of foreign character, of this I am certain, that whatever is to be truly great and affecting must have on it the strong stamp of the native land; not a law this, but a necessity, from the intense hold on their country of the affections of all truly great men; all classicality, all middle-age patent reviving, is utterly vain and absurd; if we are now to do anything great, good, awful, religious, it must be got out of our own little island and out of this year 1846, railroads and all: if a British painter, I say this in earnest seriousness, cannot make historical characters out of this British House of Peers, he cannot paint history; and if he cannot make a Madonna of a British girl of the nineteenth century, he cannot paint one at all.

This rule, of course, holds in landscape; yet so far less authoritatively, that the material nature of all countries and times is in many points actually, and in all, in principle, the same; so that feelings educated in Cumberland, may find their food in Switzerland, and impressions first received among the rocks of Cornwall, be recalled upon the precipices of Genoa. Add to this actual sameness, the power of every great mind to possess itself of the spirit of things once presented to it, and it is evident, that little limitation can be set to the landscape painter as to the choice of his field; and that the law of nationality will hold with him only so far as a certain joyfulness and completion will be by preference found in those parts of his subject which remind him of his own land. But if he attempt to impress on his landscapes any other spirit than that he has felt, and to make them landscapes of other times, it is all over with him, at least, in the degree in which such reflected moonshine takes place of the genuine light of the present day.

The reader will at once perceive how much trouble this simple principle will save both the painter and the critic; it at once sets aside the whole school of common composi-

tion, and exonerates us from the labour of minutely examining any landscape which has nymphs or philosophers in it.

It is hardly necessary for us to illustrate this principle by any reference to the works of early landscape painters, as I suppose it is universally acknowledged with respect to them; Titian being the most remarkable instance of the influence of the native air on a strong mind, and Claude, of that of the classical poison on a weak one; but it is very necessary to keep it in mind in reviewing the works of our great modern landscape painter.

I do not know in what district of England Turner first or longest studied, but the scenery whose influence I can trace most definitely throughout his works, varied as they are, is that of Yorkshire. Of all his drawings, I think, those of the Yorkshire series have the most heart in them, the most affectionate, simple, unwearied, serious finishing of truth. There is in them little seeking after effect, but a strong love of place; little exhibition of the artist's own powers or peculiarities, but intense appreciation of the smallest local minutiæ.

These drawings have unfortunately changed hands frequently, and have been abused and ill treated by picture dealers and cleaners; the greater number of them, are now mere wrecks. I name them not as instances, but as proofs of the artist's study in this district; for the affection to which they owe their excellence, must have been grounded long years before. It is to be traced, not only in these drawings of the places themselves, but in the peculiar love of the painter for rounded forms of hills; not but that he is right in this on general principles, for I doubt not, that with his peculiar feeling for beauty of line, his hills would have been rounded still, even if he had studied first among the peaks of Cadore; but rounded to the same extent and with the same delight in their roundness, they would not have been.

It is, I believe, to those broad wooded steeps and swells of the Yorkshire downs that we in part owe the singular massiveness that prevails in Turner's mountain drawing, and gives it one of its chief elements of grandeur. Let the

reader open the *Liber Studiorum*, and compare the painter's enjoyment of the lines in the Ben Arthur, with his comparative uncomfortableness among those of the aiguilles about the Mer de Glace. Great as he is, those peaks would have been touched very differently by a Savoyard as great as he.

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I do not know at what time the painter first went abroad, but among the earliest of the series of the *Liber Studiorum* (dates 1808, 1809), occur the magnificent Mont St. Gothard, and Little Devil's Bridge. Now it is remarkable that after his acquaintance with this scenery, so congenial in almost all respects with the energy of his mind, and supplying him with materials of which in these two subjects, and in the Chartreuse, and several others afterwards, he showed both his entire appreciation and command, the proportion of English to foreign subjects should in the rest of the work be more than two to one; and that those English subjects should be—many of them—of a kind peculiarly simple, and of every day occurrence; such as the Pembury Mill, the Farm Yard Composition with the White Horse, that with the cocks and pigs, Hedging and Ditching, Watercress Gatherers (scene at Twickenham), and the beautiful and solemn rustic subject called a Watermill; and that the architectural subjects, instead of being taken, as might have been expected of an artist so fond of treating effects of extended space, from some of the enormous continental masses, are almost exclusively British; Rivaulx, Holy Island, Dumblain, Dunstanborough, Chepstow, St. Katherine's, Greenwich Hospital, an English Parish Church, a Saxon ruin, and an exquisite reminiscence of the English lowland castle in the pastoral with the brook, wooden bridge, and wild duck; to all of which we have nothing foreign to oppose but three slight, ill-considered, and unsatisfactory subjects, from Basle, Lauffenbourg, and Thun; and farther, not only is the preponderance of subject British, but of affection also; for it is strange with what fulness and completion the home subjects are treated in comparison with the greater part of the foreign ones. Compare the figures and sheep in the Hedging and Ditching, and the East Gate,

Winchelsea, together with the near leafage, with the puzzled foreground and inappropriate figures of the Lake of Thun; or the cattle and road of the St. Catherine's Hill, with the foreground of the Bonneville; or the exquisite figure with the sheaf of corn in the Watermill, with the vintagers of the Grenoble subject.

In his foliage the same predilections are remarkable. Reminiscences of English willows by the brooks, and English forest glades mingle even with the heroic foliage of the Æsacus and Hesperie, and the Cephalus; into the pine, whether of Switzerland or the glorious Stone, he cannot enter, or enters at his peril, like Ariel. Those of the Valley of Chamounix are fine masses, better pines than other people's, but not a bit like pines for all that; he feels his weakness, and tears them off the distant mountains with the mercilessness of an avalanche. The Stone pines of the two Italian compositions are fine in their arrangement, but they are very pitiful pines; the glory of the Alpine rose he never touches; he mounches chestnuts with no relish; never has learned to like Olives; and, by the vine, we find him in the foreground of the Grenoble Alps laid utterly and incontrovertibly on his back.

6. Turner's Overcharged Brilliancy.

THERE is, in the first room of the National Gallery, a landscape attributed to Gaspar Poussin, called sometimes Aricia, sometimes Le or La Riccia, according to the fancy of catalogue printers. Whether it can be supposed to resemble the ancient Aricia, now La Riccia, close to Albano, I will not take upon me to determine, seeing that most of the towns of these old masters are quite as like one place as another; but, at any rate, it is a town on a hill, wooded with two-and-thirty bushes, of very uniform size, and possessing about the same number of leaves each. These bushes are all painted in with one dull opaque brown, becoming very slightly greenish towards the lights, and discover in one place a bit of rock, which of course would in nature

have been cool and grey beside the lustrous hues of foliage, and which, therefore, being moreover completely in shade, is consistently and scientifically painted of a very clear, pretty, and positive brick red, the only thing like colour in the picture. The foreground is a piece of road, which, in order to make allowance for its greater nearness, for its being completely in light, and, it may be presumed, for the quantity of vegetation usually present on carriage-roads, is given in a very cool green grey; and the truth of the picture is completed by a number of dots in the sky on the right, with a stalk to them, of a sober and similar brown.

Not long ago, I was slowly descending this very bit of carriage-road, the first turn after you leave Albano, not a little impeded by the worthy successors of the ancient prototypes of Veiento.[1] It had been wild weather when I left Rome, and all across the Campagna the clouds were sweeping in sulphurous blue, with a clap of thunder or two, and breaking gleams of sun along the Claudian aqueduct, lighting up the infinity of its arches like the bridge of chaos. But as I climbed the long slope of the Alban mount, the storm swept finally to the north, and the noble outline of the domes of Albano and graceful darkness of its ilex grove rose against pure streaks of alternate blue and amber; the upper sky gradually flushing through the last fragments of rain-cloud in deep, palpitating azure, half æther and half dew. The noon-day sun came slanting down the rocky slopes of La Riccia, and its masses of entangled and tall foliage, whose autumnal tints were mixed with the wet verdure of a thousand evergreens, were penetrated with it as with rain. I cannot call it colour, it was conflagration. Purple, and crimson, and scarlet, like the curtains of God's tabernacle, the rejoicing trees sank into the valley in showers of light, every separate leaf quivering with buoyant and burning life; each, as it turned to reflect or to transmit the sunbeam, first a torch and then an emerald. Far up

[1] "Cæcus adulator—
Dignus Aricinos qui mendicaret ad axes,
Blandaque devexæ jactaret basia rhedæ."

into the recesses of the valley, the green vistas arched like the hollows of mighty waves of some crystalline sea, with the arbutus flowers dashed along their flanks for foam, and silver flakes of orange spray tossed into the air around them, breaking over the grey walls of rock into a thousand separate stars, fading and kindling alternately as the weak wind lifted and let them fall. Every glade of grass burned like the golden floor of heaven, opening in sudden gleams as the foliage broke and closed above it, as sheet-lightning opens in a cloud at sunset; the motionless masses of dark rock—dark though flushed with scarlet lichen—casting their quiet shadows across its restless radiance, the fountain underneath them filling its marble hollow with blue mist and fitful sound, and over all—the multitudinous bars of amber and rose, the sacred clouds that have no darkness, and only exist to illumine, were seen in fathomless intervals between the solemn and orbed repose of the Stone pines, passing to lose themselves in the last, white, blinding lustre of the measureless line where the Campagna melted into the blaze of the sea.

Tell me who is likest this, Poussin or Turner? Not in his most daring and dazzling efforts could Turner himself come near it; but you could not at the time have thought of or remembered the work of any other man as having the remotest hue or resemblance of what you saw. Nor am I speaking of what is uncommon or unnatural; there is no climate, no place, and scarcely an hour, in which nature does not exhibit colour which no mortal effort can imitate or approach. For all our artificial pigments are, even when seen under the same circumstances, dead and lightless beside her living colour; the green of a growing leaf, the scarlet of a fresh flower, no art nor expedient can reach; but in addition to this, nature exhibits her hues under an intensity of sunlight which trebles their brilliancy; while the painter, deprived of this splendid aid, works still with what is actually a grey shadow compared to the force of nature's colour. Take a blade of grass and a scarlet flower, and place them so as to receive sunlight beside the brightest canvass that ever left Turner's easel, and the

picture will be extinguished. So far from outfacing nature, he does not, as far as mere vividness of colour goes, one-half reach her; but does he use this brilliancy of colour on objects to which it does not properly belong? Let us compare his works in this respect with a few instances from the old masters.

There is, on the left hand side of Salvator's Mercury and the Woodman in our National Gallery, something without doubt intended for a rocky mountain, in the middle distance, near enough for all its fissures and crags to be distinctly visible, or, rather, for a great many awkward scratches of the brush over it to be visible, which, though not particularly representative either of one thing or another, are without doubt intended to be symbolical of rocks. Now no mountain in full light, and near enough for its details of crag to be seen, is without great variety of delicate colour. Salvator has painted it throughout without one instant of variation; but this, I suppose, is simplicity and generalization—let it pass: but what is the colour? *Pure sky blue*, without one grain of grey, or any modifying hue whatsoever;—the same brush which had just given the bluest parts of the sky has been more loaded at the same part of the pallet, and the whole mountain thrown in with unmitigated ultramarine. Now mountains only can become pure blue when there is so much air between us and them that they become mere flat, dark shades, every detail being totally lost: they become blue when they become air, and not till then. Consequently this part of Salvator's painting, being of hills perfectly clear and near, with all their details visible, is, as far as colour is concerned, broad, bold falsehood—the direct assertion of direct impossibility.

In the whole range of Turner's works, recent or of old date, you will not find an instance of anything near enough to have details visible, painted in sky blue. Wherever Turner gives blue, there he gives atmosphere; it is air, not object. Blue he gives to his sea; so does nature; blue he gives, sapphire-deep, to his extreme distance; so does nature; blue he gives to the misty shadows and hollows of his hills; so does nature: but blue he gives *not*, where detail

and illumined surface are visible; as he comes into light and character, so he breaks into warmth and varied hue; nor is there in one of his works, and I speak of the Academy pictures especially, one touch of cold colour which is not to be accounted for, and proved right and full of meaning.

I do not say that Salvator's distance is not artist-like; both in that, and in the yet more glaringly false distances of Titian, and in hundreds of others of equal boldness of exaggeration, I can take delight, and perhaps should be sorry to see them other than they are; but it is somewhat singular to hear people talking of Turner's exquisite care and watchfulness in colour as false, while they receive such cases of preposterous and audacious fiction with the most generous and simple credulity.

Again, in the upper sky of the picture of Nicholas Poussin, before noticed, the clouds are of a very fine clear olive-green, about the same tint as the brightest parts of the trees beneath them. They cannot have altered (or else the trees must have been painted in grey), for the hue is harmonious and well united with the rest of the picture, and the blue and white in the centre of the sky are still fresh and pure. Now a green sky in open and illumined distance is very frequent, and very beautiful; but rich olive-green clouds, as far as I am acquainted with nature, are a piece of colour in which she is not apt to indulge. You will be puzzled to show me such a thing in the recent works of Turner.[1] Again, take any important group of trees, I do not care whose—Claude's, Salvator's, or Poussin's—with lateral light (that in the Marriage of Isaac and Rebecca, or Gaspar's Sacrifice of Isaac, for instance): can

[1] There is perhaps nothing more characteristic of a great colourist than his power of using greens in strange places without their being felt as such, or at least than a constant preference of green grey to purple grey. And this hue of Poussin's clouds would have been perfectly agreeable and allowable, had there been gold or crimson enough in the rest of the picture to have thrown it into grey. It is only because the lower clouds are pure white and blue, and because the trees are of the same colour as the clouds, that the cloud colour becomes false. There is a fine instance of a sky, green in itself, but turned grey by the opposition of warm colour, in Turner's Devonport with the Dockyards.

it be seriously supposed that those murky browns and melancholy greens are representative of the tints of leaves under full noon-day sun? I know that you cannot help looking upon all these pictures as pieces of dark relief against a light wholly proceeding from the distances; but they are nothing of the kind—they are noon and morning effects with full lateral light. Be so kind as to match the colour of a leaf in the sun (the darkest you like) as nearly as you can, and bring your matched colour and set it beside one of these groups of trees, and take a blade of common grass, and set it beside any part of the fullest light of their foregrounds, and then talk about the truth of colour of the old masters!

And let not arguments respecting the sublimity or fidelity of *impression* be brought forward here. I have nothing whatever to do with this at present. I am not talking about what is sublime, but about what is true. People attack Turner on this ground;—they never speak of beauty or sublimity with respect to him, but of nature and truth, and let them support their own favourite masters on the same grounds. Perhaps I may have the very deepest veneration for the *feeling* of the old masters; but I must not let it influence me now—my business is to match colours, not to talk sentiment. Neither let it be said that I am going too much into details, and that general truth may be obtained by local falsehood. Truth is only to be measured by close comparison of actual facts; we may talk for ever about it in generals, and prove nothing. We cannot tell what effect falsehood may produce on this or that person, but we can very well tell what is false and what is not; and if it produce on our senses the effect of truth, that only demonstrates their imperfection and inaccuracy, and need of cultivation. Turner's colour is glaring to one person's sensations, and beautiful to another's. This proves nothing. Poussin's colour is right to one, soot to another. This proves nothing. There is no means of arriving at any conclusion but close comparison of both with the known and demonstrable hues of nature, and this comparison will invariably turn Claude or Poussin into blackness, and even Turner into grey.

Whatever depth of gloom may seem to invest the objects of a real landscape, yet a window with that landscape seen through it, will invariably appear a broad space of light as compared with the shade of the room walls; and this single circumstance may prove to us both the intensity and the diffusion of daylight in open air, and the necessity, if a picture is to be truthful in effect of colour, that it should tell as a broad space of graduated illumination—not, as do those of the old masters, as a patchwork of black shades. Their works are nature in mourning weeds—*οὐδ' ἐν ἡλίῳ καθαρῷ τεθραμμένοι, ἀλλ' ὑπὸ συμμιγεῖ σκιᾷ.*

It is true that there are, here and there, in the Academy pictures, passages in which Turner has translated the unattainable intensity of one tone of colour, into the attainable pitch of a higher one: the golden green, for instance, of intense sunshine on verdure, into pure yellow, because he knows it to be impossible, with any mixture of blue whatsoever, to give faithfully its relative intensity of light, and Turner always will have his light and shade right, whatever it costs him in colour. But he does this in rare cases, and even then over very small spaces; and I should be obliged to his critics if they would go out to some warm, mossy green bank in full summer sunshine, and try to reach its tone; and when they find, as find they will, Indian yellow and chrome look dark beside it, let them tell me candidly which is nearest truth—the gold of Turner, or the mourning and murky olive browns and verdigris greens in which Claude, with the industry and intelligence of a Sevres china painter, drags the laborious bramble leaves over his childish foreground.

But it is singular enough that the chief attacks on Turner for overcharged brilliancy, are made, not when there could by any possibility be any chance of his outstepping nature, but when he has taken subjects which no colours of earth could ever vie with or reach, such, for instance, as his sunsets among the high clouds. When I come to speak of skies, I shall point out what divisions, proportioned to their elevation, exist in the character of clouds. It is the highest region—that exclusively characterized by white, filmy, multitudinous, and quiet clouds, arranged in bars, or streaks,

or flakes, of which I speak at present, a region which no landscape painters have ever made one effort to represent, except Rubens and Turner—the latter taking it for his most favourite and frequent study. Now we have been speaking hitherto of what is constant and necessary in nature, of the ordinary effects of daylight on ordinary colours, and we repeat again, that no gorgeousness of the pallet can reach even these. But it is a widely different thing when nature herself takes a colouring fit, and does something extraordinary, something really to exhibit her power. She has a thousand ways and means of rising above herself, but incomparably the noblest manifestations of her capability of colour are in these sunsets among the high clouds. I speak especially of the moment before the sun sinks, when his light turns pure rose-colour, and when this light falls upon a zenith covered with countless cloud-forms of inconceivable delicacy, threads and flakes of vapour, which would in common daylight be pure snow-white, and which give therefore fair field to the tone of light. There is then no limit to the multitude, and no check to the intensity, of the hues assumed. The whole sky from the zenith to the horizon becomes one molten, mantling sea of colour and fire; every black bar turns into massy gold, every ripple and wave into unsullied, shadowless, crimson, and purple, and scarlet, and colours for which there are no words in language, and no ideas in the mind—things which can only be conceived while they are visible—the intense hollow blue of the upper sky melting through it all—showing here deep, and pure, and lightless; there, modulated by the filmy, formless body of the transparent vapour till it is lost imperceptibly in its crimson and gold. Now there is no connection, no one link of association or resemblance, between those skies and the work of any mortal hand but Turner's. He alone has followed nature in these her highest efforts; he follows her faithfully, but far behind; follows at such a distance below her intensity that the Napoleon of last year's exhibition, and the Temeraire of the year before, would look colourless and cold if the eye came upon them after one of nature's sunsets among the high clouds.

But there are a thousand reasons why this should not be believed. The concurrence of circumstances necessary to produce the sunsets of which I speak does not take place above five or six times in a summer, and then only for a space of from five to ten minutes, just as the sun reaches the horizon. Considering how seldom people think of looking for a sunset at all, and how seldom, if they do, they are in a position from which it can be fully seen, the chances that their attention should be awake, and their position favourable, during these few flying instants of the year, are almost as nothing. What can the citizen, who can see only the red light on the canvass of the waggon at the end of the street, and the crimson colour of the bricks of his neighbour's chimney, know of the flood of fire which deluges the sky from the horizon to the zenith? What can even the quiet inhabitant of the English lowlands, whose scene for the manifestation of the fire of heaven is limited to the tops of hayricks, and the rooks' nests in the old elm-trees, know of the mighty passages of splendour which are tossed from Alp to Alp over the azure of a thousand miles of champaign? Even granting the constant vigour of observation, and supposing the possession of such impossible knowledge, it needs but a moment's reflection to prove how incapable the memory is of retaining for any time the distinct image of the sources even of its most vivid impressions. What recollection have we of the sunsets which delighted us last year? We may know that they were magnificent, or glowing, but no distinct image of colour or form is retained—nothing of whose *degree* (for the great difficulty with the memory is to retain, not facts, but *degrees* of fact) we could be so certain as to say of anything now presented to us, that it is like it. If we did say so, we should be wrong; for we may be quite certain that the energy of an impression fades from the memory, and becomes more and more indistinct every day; and thus we compare a faded and indistinct image with the decision and certainty of one present to the senses. How constantly do we affirm that the thunderstorm of last week was the most terrible one we ever saw in our lives, because we

compare it, not with the thunderstorm of last year, but with the faded and feeble recollection of it. And so, when we enter an exhibition, as we have no definite standard of truth before us, our feelings are toned down and subdued to the quietness of colour, which is all that human power can ordinarily attain to; and when we turn to a piece of higher and closer truth, approaching the pitch of the colour of nature, but to which we are not guided, as we should be in nature, by corresponding gradations of light everywhere around us, but which is isolated and cut off suddenly by a frame and a wall, and surrounded by darkness and coldness, what can we expect but that it should surprise and shock the feelings?

Suppose, where the Napoleon hung in the Academy last year, there could have been left, instead, an opening in the wall, and through that opening, in the midst of the obscurity of the dim room and the smoke-laden atmosphere, there could suddenly have been poured the full glory of a tropical sunset, reverberated from the sea; How would you have shrunk, blinded, from its scarlet and intolerable lightnings! What picture in the room would not have been blackness after it? And why then do you blame Turner because he dazzles you? Does not the falsehood rest with those who do *not?* There was not one hue in this whole picture which was not far below what nature would have used in the same circumstances, nor was there one inharmonious or at variance with the rest;—the stormy blood-red of the horizon, the scarlet of the breaking sunlight, the rich crimson browns of the wet and illumined seaweed, the pure gold and purple of the upper sky, and, shed through it all, the deep passage of solemn blue, where the cold moonlight fell on one pensive spot of the limitless shore—all were given with harmony as perfect as their colour was intense; and if, instead of passing, as I doubt not you did, in the hurry of your unreflecting prejudice, you had paused but so much as one quarter of an hour before the picture, you would have found the sense of air and space blended with every line, and breathing in every cloud, and every colour instinct and radiant with visible, glowing, absorbing light

7. The Open Sky.

It is a strange thing how little in general people know about the sky. It is the part of creation in which nature has done more for the sake of pleasing man, more, for the sole and evident purpose of talking to him and teaching him, than in any other of her works, and it is just the part in which we least attend to her. There are not many of her other works in which some more material or essential purpose than the mere pleasing of man is not answered by every part of their organization; but every essential purpose of the sky might, so far as we know, be answered, if once in three days, or thereabouts, a great, ugly black rain cloud were brought up over the blue, and everything well watered, and so all left blue again till next time, with perhaps a film of morning and evening mist for dew. And instead of this, there is not a moment of any day of our lives, when nature is not producing scene after scene, picture after picture, glory after glory, and working still upon such exquisite and constant principles of the most perfect beauty, that it is quite certain it is all done for us, and intended for our perpetual pleasure. And every man, wherever placed, however far from other sources of interest or of beauty, has this doing for him constantly. The noblest scenes of the earth can be seen and known but by few; it is not intended that man should live always in the midst of them; he injures them by his presence, he ceases to feel them if he be always with them; but the sky is for all; bright as it is, it is not "too bright, nor good, for human nature's daily food," it is fitted in all its functions for the perpetual comfort and exalting of the heart, for the soothing it and purifying it from its dross and dust. Sometimes gentle, sometimes capricious, sometimes awful, never the same for two moments together; almost human in its passions, almost spiritual in its tenderness, almost divine in its infinity, its appeal to what is immortal in us, is as distinct, as its ministry of chastisement or of blessing to what is mortal is essential. And yet we

never attend to it, we never make it a subject of thought, but as it has to do with our animal sensations; we look upon all by which it speaks to us more clearly than to brutes, upon all which bears witness to the intention of the Supreme, that we are to receive more from the covering vault than the light and the dew which we share with the weed and the worm, only as a succession of meaningless and monotonous accident, too common and too vain to be worthy of a moment of watchfulness, or a glance of admiration. If in our moments of utter idleness and insipidity, we turn to the sky as a last resource, which of its phenomena do we speak of? One says it has been wet, and another, it has been windy, and another, it has been warm. Who, among the whole chattering crowd, can tell me of the forms and the precipices of the chain of tall white mountains that girded the horizon at noon yesterday? Who saw the narrow sunbeam that came out of the south, and smote upon their summits until they melted and mouldered away in a dust of blue rain? Who saw the dance of the dead clouds when the sunlight left them last night, and the west wind blew them before it like withered leaves? All has passed, unregretted as unseen; or if the apathy be ever shaken off, even for an instant, it is only by what is gross, or what is extraordinary; and yet it is not in the broad and fierce manifestations of the elemental energies, not in the clash of the hail, nor the drift of the whirlwind, that the highest characters of the sublime are developed. God is not in the earthquake, nor in the fire, but in the still, small voice. They are but the blunt and the low faculties of our nature, which can only be addressed through lampblack and lightning. It is in quiet and subdued passages of unobtrusive majesty, the deep, and the calm, and the perpetual — that which must be sought ere it is seen, and loved ere it is understood — things which the angels work out for us daily, and yet vary eternally, which are never wanting, and never repeated, which are to be found always, yet each found but once; it is through these that the lesson of devotion is chiefly taught, and the blessing of beauty given.

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Let us begin with the simple open blue of the sky. This is of course the colour of the pure atmospheric air, not the aqueous vapour, but the pure azote and oxygen, and it is the total colour of the whole mass of that air between us and the void of space. It is modified by the varying quantity of aqueous vapour suspended in it, whose colour, in its most imperfect, and therefore most visible, state of solution, is pure white (as in steam), which receives, like any other white, the warm hues of the rays of the sun, and, according to its quantity and imperfect solution, makes the sky paler, and at the same time more or less grey, by mixing warm tones with its blue. This grey aqueous vapour, when very decided becomes mist, and when local, cloud. Hence the sky is to be considered as a transparent blue liquid, in which, at various elevations, clouds are suspended, those clouds being themselves only particular visible spaces of a substance with which the whole mass of this liquid is more or less impregnated.

Now, we all know this perfectly well, and yet we so far forget it in practice, that we little notice the constant connection kept up by nature between her blue and her clouds: and we are not offended by the constant habit of the old masters, of considering the blue sky as totally distinct in its nature, and far separated from the vapours which float in it. With them, cloud is cloud, and blue is blue, and no kind of connection between them is ever hinted at. The sky is thought of as a clear, high, material dome, the clouds as separate bodies suspended beneath it, and in consequence, however delicate and exquisitely removed in tone their skies may be, you always look *at* them, not *through* them.

Now if there be one characteristic of the sky more valuable or necessary to be rendered than another, it is that which Wordsworth has given in the second book of *The Excursion*:—

> The chasm of sky above my head
> Is Heaven's profoundest azure. No domain
> For fickle short-lived clouds, to occupy,
> Or to pass through;—but rather an *abyss*
> In which the everlasting stars abide,

And whose soft gloom, and boundless depth, might tempt
The curious eye to look for them by day.

And, in his *American Notes*, I remember Dickens notices the same truth, describing himself as lying drowsily on the barge deck, looking not at, but *through* the sky. And if you look intensely at the pure blue of a serene sky, you will see that there is a variety and fulness in its very repose. It is not flat dead colour, but a deep, quivering, transparent body of penetrable air, in which you trace or imagine, short, falling spots of deceiving light, and dim shades, faint, veiled vestiges of dark vapour; and it is this trembling transparency which our great modern master has especially aimed at and given. His blue is never laid on in smooth coats, but in breaking, mingling, melting hues, a quarter of an inch of which, cut off from all the rest of the picture, is still *spacious*, still infinite and immeasurable in depth. It is a painting of the air, something into which you can see, through the parts which are near you, into those which are far off; something which has no surface, and through which we can plunge far and farther, and without stay or end, into the profundity of space.

8. The Upper Cloud Region.

THE first and most important character of clouds, is dependent on the different altitudes at which they are formed. The atmosphere may be conveniently considered as divided into three spaces, each inhabited by clouds of specific character altogether different, though, in reality, there is no distinct limit fixed between them by nature, clouds being formed at *every* altitude, and partaking according to their altitude, more or less of the characters of the upper or lower regions. The scenery of the sky is thus formed of an infinitely graduated series of systematic forms of cloud, each of which has its own region in which alone it is formed, and each of which has specific characters which can only be properly determined by comparing them as they are found clearly distinguished by intervals of considerable space. I shall therefore consider

the sky as divided into three regions, the upper region, or region of the cirrus; the central region, or region of the stratus; the lower region, or the region of the rain-cloud.

The clouds which I wish to consider as included in the upper region, never touch even the highest mountains of Europe, and may therefore be looked upon as never formed below an elevation of at least 15,000 feet; they are the motionless multitudinous lines of delicate vapour with which the blue of the open sky is commonly streaked or speckled after several days of fine weather. I must be pardoned for giving a detailed description of their specific characters as they are of constant occurrence in the works of modern artists, and I shall have occasion to speak frequently of them in future parts of the work.

Their chief characters are—first, Symmetry: They are nearly always arranged in some definite and evident order, commonly in long ranks reaching sometimes from the zenith to the horizon, each rank composed of an infinite number of transverse bars of about the same length, each bar thickest in the middle, and terminating in a traceless vaporous point at each side; the ranks are in the direction of the wind, and the bars of course at right angles to it; these latter are commonly slightly bent in the middle. Frequently two systems of this kind, indicative of two currents of wind, at different altitudes intersect each other, forming a network. Another frequent arrangement is in groups of excessively fine, silky, parallel fibres, commonly radiating, or having a tendency to radiate, from one of their extremities, and terminating in a plumy sweep at the other: these are vulgarly known as "mares' tails." The plumy and expanded extremity of these is often bent upwards, sometimes back, and up again, giving an appearance of great flexibility and unity at the same time, as if the clouds were tough, and would hold together however bent. The narrow extremity is invariably turned to the wind, and the fibres are parallel with its direction. The upper clouds always fall into some modification of one or other of these arrangements. They thus differ from all other clouds, in having a plan and system; whereas other clouds, though there are certain laws which

they cannot break, have yet perfect freedom from anything like a relative and general system of government. The upper clouds are to the lower, what soldiers on parade are to a mixed multitude; no men walk on their heads or their hands, and so there are certain laws which no clouds violate; but there is nothing except in the upper clouds resembling symmetrical discipline.

Secondly, Sharpness of Edge: The edges of the bars of the upper clouds which are turned to the wind, are often the sharpest which the sky shows; no outline whatever of any other kind of cloud, however marked and energetic, ever approaches the delicate decision of these edges. The outline of a black thunder-cloud is striking, from the great energy of the colour or shade of the general mass; but as a line, it is soft and indistinct, compared with the edge of the cirrus, in a clear sky with a brisk breeze. On the other hand, the edge of the bar turned away from the wind is always soft, often imperceptible, melting into the blue interstice between it and its next neighbour. Commonly the sharper one edge is, the softer is the other, and the clouds look flat, and as if they slipped over each other like the scales of a fish. When both edges are soft, as is always the case when the sky is clear and windless, the cloud looks solid, round, and fleecy.

Thirdly, Multitude: The delicacy of these vapours is sometimes carried into such an infinity of division, that no other sensation of number that the earth or heaven can give is so impressive. Number is always most felt when it is symmetrical (vide Burke *On the Sublime*, Part ii., sect. 8), and, therefore, no sea-waves nor fresh leaves make their number so evident or so impressive as these vapours. Nor is nature content with an infinity of bars or lines alone—each bar is in its turn severed into a number of small undulatory masses, more or less connected according to the violence of the wind. When this division is merely effected by undulation, the cloud exactly resembles sea-sand ribbed by the tide; but when the division amounts to real separation we have the mottled or mackerel skies. Commonly, the greater the division of its bars, the broader and more

shapeless is the rank or field, so that in the mottled sky it is lost altogether, and we have large irregular fields of equal size, masses like flocks of sheep; such clouds are three or four thousand feet below the legitimate cirrus. I have seen them cast a shadow on the Mont Blanc at sunset, so that they must descend nearly to within fifteen thousand feet of the earth.

Fourthly, Purity of Colour: The nearest of these clouds—those over the observer's head, being at least three miles above him, and nearly all entering the ordinary sphere of vision, farther from him still—their dark sides are much greyer and cooler than those of other clouds, owing to their distance. They are composed of the purest aqueous vapour, free from all foulness of earthy gases, and of this in the lightest and most ætherial state in which it can be, to be visible. Farther, they receive the light of the sun in a state of far greater intensity than lower objects, the beams being transmitted to them through atmospheric air far less dense, and wholly unaffected by mist, smoke, or any other impurity. Hence their colours are more pure and vivid, and their white less sullied than those of any other clouds.

Lastly, Variety: Variety is never so conspicuous, as when it is united with symmetry. The perpetual change of form in other clouds is monotonous in its very dissimilarity, nor is difference striking where no connection is implied; but if through a range of barred clouds, crossing half the heaven, all governed by the same forces and falling into one general form, there be yet a marked and evident dissimilarity between each member of the great mass—one more finely drawn, the next more delicately moulded, the next more gracefully bent—each broken into differently modelled and variously numbered groups, the variety is doubly striking, because contrasted with the perfect symmetry of which it forms a part. Hence, the importance of the truth, that nature never lets one of the members of even her most disciplined groups of cloud be like another; but though each is adapted for the same function, and in its great features resembles all the others, not one, out of the millions

with which the sky is chequered, is without a separate beauty and character, appearing to have had distinct thought occupied in its conception, and distinct forces in its production; and in addition to this perpetual invention, visible in each member of each system, we find systems of separate cloud intersecting each other, the sweeping lines mingled and interwoven with the rigid bars, these in their turn melting into banks of sand-like ripple and flakes of drifted and irregular foam; under all, perhaps the massy outline of some lower cloud moves heavily across the motionless buoyancy of the upper lines, and indicates at once their elevation and their repose.

Such are the great attributes of the upper cloud region; whether they are beautiful, valuable, or impressive, it is not our present business to decide, nor to endeavour to discover the reason of the somewhat remarkable fact, that the whole field of ancient landscape art affords, as far as we remember, but one instance of any effort whatever to represent the character of this cloud region. That one instance is the landscape of Rubens in our own gallery, in which the mottled or fleecy sky is given with perfect truth and exquisite beauty. To this should perhaps be added, some of the backgrounds of the historical painters, where horizontal lines were required, and a few level bars of white or warm colour cross the serenity of the blue. These, as far as they go, are often very perfect, and the elevation and repose of their effect might, we should have thought, have pointed out to the landscape painters that there was something to be made out of the high clouds. Not one of them, however, took the hint. To whom, among them all, can we look for the slightest realization of the fine and faithful descriptive passage of *The Excursion*, already alluded to:

> But rays of light,
> Now suddenly diverging from the orb,
> Retired behind the mountain tops, or, veiled
> By the dense air, shot upwards to the crown
> Of the blue firmament—aloft—and wide;
> And multitudes of little floating clouds,
> Ere we, who saw, of change were conscious, pierced
> Through their ethereal texture, had become

Vivid as fire,—clouds separately poised,
Innumerable multitude of forms
Scattered through half the circle of the sky;
And giving back, and shedding each on each,
With prodigal communion, the bright hues
Which from the unapparent fount of glory
They had imbibed, and ceased not to receive.
That which the heavens displayed the liquid deep
Repeated, but with unity sublime.

There is but one master whose works we can think of while we read this; one alone has taken notice of the neglected upper sky; it is his peculiar and favourite field; he has watched its every modification, and given its every phase and feature; at all hours, in all seasons, he has followed its passions and its changes, and has brought down and laid open to the world another apocalypse of Heaven.

There is scarcely a painting of Turner's, in which serenity of sky and intensity of light are aimed at together, in which these clouds are not used, though there are not two cases in which they are used altogether alike. Sometimes they are crowded together in masses of mingling light, as in the Shylock; every part and atom sympathizing in that continuous expression of slow movement which Shelley has so beautifully touched:

Underneath the young grey dawn
A multitude of dense, white fleecy clouds,
Were wandering in thick flocks along the mountains,
Shepherded by the slow, unwilling wind.

At other times they are blended with the sky itself, felt only here and there by a ray of light calling them into existence out of its misty shade, as in the Mercury and Argus; sometimes, where great repose is to be given, they appear in a few detached, equal, rounded flakes, which seem to hang motionless, each like the shadow of the other, in the deep blue of the zenith, as in the Acro-Corinth; sometimes they are scattered in fiery flying fragments, each burning with separate energy, as in the Temeraire; sometimes woven together with fine threads of intermediate darkness, melting into the blue, as in the Napoleon. But in all cases the exquisite manipulation of the master gives to each

atom of the multitude its own character and expression. Though they be countless as leaves, each has its portion of light, its shadow, its reflex, its peculiar and separating form.

9. The Central Cloud Region.

The Central Cloud Region I consider as including all clouds which are the usual characteristic of ordinary serene weather, and which touch and envelope the mountains of Switzerland, but never affect those of our own island; they may therefore be considered as occupying a space of air ten thousand feet in height, extending from five to fifteen thousand feet above the sea.

These clouds, according to their elevation, appear with great variety of form, often partaking of the streaked or mottled character of the higher region, and as often, when the precursors of storm, manifesting forms closely connected with the lowest rain clouds; but the species especially characteristic of the central region is a white, ragged, irregular, and scattered vapour, which has little form and less colour, and of which a good example may be seen in the largest landscape of Cuyp, in the Dulwich Gallery. When this vapour collects into masses, it is partially rounded, clumsy, and ponderous, as if it would tumble out of the sky, shaded with a dull grey, and totally devoid of any appearance of energy or motion.

Even in nature, these clouds are comparatively uninteresting, scarcely worth raising our heads to look at; and on canvass, valuable only as a means of introducing light, and breaking the monotony of blue; yet they are, perhaps, beyond all others the favourite clouds of the Dutch masters. Whether they had any motive for the adoption of such materials, beyond the extreme facility with which acres of canvass might thus be covered without any troublesome exertion of thought; or any temptation to such selections beyond the impossibility of error where nature shows no form, and the impossibility of deficiency where she shows no beauty, it is not here the place to determine. Such

skies are happily beyond the reach of criticism, for he who tells you nothing cannot tell you a falsehood. A little flake-white, glazed with a light brush over the carefully toned blue, permitted to fall into whatever forms chance might determine, with the single precaution that their edges should be tolerably irregular, supplied, in hundreds of instances, a sky quite good enough for all ordinary purposes—quite good enough for cattle to graze, or boors to play at nine-pins under—and equally devoid of all that could gratify, inform, or offend.

But although this kind of cloud is, as I have said, typical of the central region, it is not one which nature is fond of. She scarcely ever lets an hour pass without some manifestation of finer forms, sometimes approaching the upper cirri, sometimes the lower cumulus. And then in the lower outlines, we have the nearest approximation which nature ever presents to the clouds of Claude, Salvator, and Poussin, to the characters of which I must request especial attention, as it is here only that we shall have a fair opportunity of comparing their skies with those of the modern school. I shall, as before, glance rapidly at the great laws of specific form, and so put it in the power of the reader to judge for himself of the truth of representation.

Clouds, it is to be remembered, are not so much local vapour, as vapour rendered locally visible by a fall of temperature. Thus a cloud, whose parts are in constant motion, will hover on a snowy mountain, pursuing constantly the same track upon its flanks, and yet remaining of the same size, the same form, and in the same place, for half a day together. No matter how violent or how capricious the wind may be, the instant it approaches the spot where the chilly influence of the snow extends, the moisture it carries becomes visible, and then and there the cloud forms on the instant, apparently maintaining its form against the wind, though the careful and keen eye can see all its parts in the most rapid motion across the mountain. The outlines of such a cloud are of course not determined by the irregular impulses of the wind, but by the fixed lines of radiant heat which regulate the temperature of the atmos-

phere of the mountain. It is terminated, therefore, not by changing curves, but by steady right lines of more or less decision, often exactly correspondent with the outline of the mountain on which it is formed, and falling therefore into grotesque peaks and precipices. I have seen the marked and angular outline of the Grandes Jorasses, at Chamonix, mimicked in its every jag by a line of clouds above it. Another resultant phenomenon is the formation of cloud in the calm air to leeward of a steep summit; cloud whose edges are in rapid motion, where they are affected by the current of the wind above, and stream from the peak like the smoke of a volcano, yet always vanish at a certain distance from it as steam issuing from a chimney. When wet weather of some duration is approaching, a small white spot of cloud will sometimes appear low on the hill flanks; it will not move, but will increase gradually for some little time, then diminish, still without moving; disappear altogether, reappear ten minutes afterwards, exactly in the same spot; increase to a greater extent than before, again disappear, again return, and at last permanently; other similar spots of cloud forming simultaneously, with various fluctuations, each in its own spot, and at the same level on the hill-side, until all expand, join together, and form an unbroken veil of threatening grey, which darkens gradually into storm. What in such cases takes place palpably and remarkably, is more or less a law of formation in all clouds whatsoever; they being bounded rather by lines expressive of changes of temperature in the atmosphere, than by the impulses of the currents of wind in which those changes take place. Even when in rapid and visible motion across the sky, the variations which take place in their outlines are not so much alterations of position and arrangement of parts, as they are the alternate formation and disappearance of parts.

There is, therefore, usually a parallelism and consistency in their great outlines, which give system to the smaller curves of which they are composed; and if these great lines be taken, rejecting the minutiæ of variation, the resultant form will almost always be angular, and full of character

and decision. In the flock-like fields of equal masses, each individual mass has the effect, not of an ellipse or circle, but of a rhomboid; the sky is crossed and chequered, not honey-combed; in the lower cumuli, even though the most rounded of all clouds, the groups are not like balloons or bubbles, but like towers or mountains. And the result of this arrangement in masses more or less angular, varied with, and chiefly constructed of, curves of the utmost freedom and beauty, is that appearance of exhaustless and fantastic energy which gives every cloud a marked character of its own, suggesting resemblances to the specific outlines of organic objects. I do not say that such accidental resemblances are a character to be imitated; but merely that they bear witness to the originality and vigour of separate conception in cloud forms, which give to the scenery of the sky a force and variety no less delightful than that of the changes of mountain outline in a hill district of great elevation; and that there is added to this a spirit-like feeling, a capricious, mocking imagery of passion and life, totally different from any effects of inanimate form that the earth can show.

The minor contours, out of which the larger outlines are composed, are indeed beautifully curvilinear; but they are never monotonous in their curves. First comes a concave line, then a convex one, then an angular jag, breaking off into spray, then a downright straight line, then a curve again, then a deep gap, and a place where all is lost and melted away, and so on; displaying in every inch of the form renewed and ceaseless invention, setting off grace with rigidity, and relieving flexibility with force, in a manner scarcely less admirable, and far more changeful than even in the muscular forms of the human frame. Nay, such is the exquisite composition of all this, that you may take any single fragment of any cloud in the sky, and you will find it put together as if there had been a year's thought over the plan of it, arranged with the most studied inequality —with the most delicate symmetry—with the most elaborate contrast, a picture in itself. You may try every other piece of cloud in the heaven, and you will find them every one as perfect, and yet not one in the least like another.

10. The Region of the Rain-cloud.

THE clouds which I wish to consider as characteristic of the lower, or rainy region, differ not so much in their real nature from those of the central and uppermost regions, as in appearance, owing to their greater nearness. For the central clouds, and perhaps even the high cirri, deposit moisture, if not distinctly rain, as is sufficiently proved by the existence of snow on the highest peaks of the Himaleh; and when, on any such mountains, we are brought into close contact with the central clouds,[1] we find them little differing from the ordinary rain-cloud of the plains, except by being slightly less dense and dark. But the apparent differences, dependent on proximity, are most marked and important.

In the first place, the clouds of the central region have, as has been before observed, pure and aërial greys for their dark sides, owing to their necessary distance from the observer; and as this distance permits a multitude of local phenomena capable of influencing colour, such as accidental sunbeams, refractions, transparencies, or local mists and showers, to be collected into a space apparently small, the colours of these clouds are always changeful and palpitating; and whatever degree of grey or of gloom may be mixed with them is invariably pure and aërial. But the nearness of the rain-cloud rendering it impossible for a number of phenomena to be at once visible, makes its hue of grey monotonous, and (by losing the blue of distance) warm and brown compared to that of the upper clouds. This is especially remarkable on any part of it which may happen to be illumined, which is of a brown, bricky, ochreous tone, never bright, always coming in dark outline on the lights of the central clouds. But it is seldom that this takes place, and when it does, never over large

[1] I am unable to say to what height the real rain-cloud may extend; perhaps there are no mountains which rise altogether above storm. I have never been in a violent storm at a greater height than between 8,000 and 9,000 feet above the level of the sea. There the rain-cloud is exceedingly light, compared to the ponderous darkness of the lower air.

spaces, little being usually seen of the rain-cloud but its under and dark side. This, when the cloud above is dense, becomes of an inky and cold grey, and sulphureous and lurid if there be thunder in the air.

With these striking differences in colour, it presents no fewer nor less important in form, chiefly from losing almost all definiteness of character and outline. It is sometimes nothing more than a thin mist, whose outline cannot be traced, rendering the landscape locally indistinct or dark; if its outline be visible, it is ragged and torn, rather a spray of cloud, taken off its edge and sifted by the wind, than an edge of the cloud itself. In fact, it rather partakes of the nature, and assumes the appearance, of real water in the state of spray, than of elastic vapour. This appearance is enhanced by the usual presence of formed rain, carried along with it in a columnar form, ordinarily, of course, reaching the ground like a veil, but very often suspended with the cloud, and hanging from it like a jagged fringe, or over it in light, rain being always lighter than the cloud it falls from. These columns, or fringes, of rain are often waved and bent by the wind, or twisted, sometimes even swept upwards from the cloud. The velocity of these vapours, though not necessarily in reality greater than that of the central clouds, appears greater, owing to their proximity, and, of course, also to the usual presence of a more violent wind. They are also apparently much more in the power of the wind, having less elastic force in themselves; but they are precisely subject to the same great laws of form which regulate the upper clouds.

They are not solid bodies borne about with the wind, but they carry the wind with them, and cause it. Every one knows, who has ever been out in a storm, that the time when it rains heaviest is precisely the time when he cannot hold up his umbrella; that the wind is carried with the cloud, and lulls when it has passed. Every one who has ever seen rain in a hill country, knows that a rain-cloud, like any other, may have all its parts in rapid motion, and yet, as a whole, remain in one spot. I remember once, when in crossing the Tête Noire, I had turned up

the valley towards Trient, I noticed a rain-cloud forming on the Glacier de Trient. With a west wind, it proceeded towards the Col de Balme, being followed by a prolonged wreath of vapour, always forming exactly at the same spot over the glacier. This long, serpent-like line of cloud went on at a great rate till it reached the valley leading down from the Col de Balme, under the slate rocks of the Croix de Fer. There it turned sharp round, and came down this valley, at right angles to its former progress, and finally directly contrary to it, till it came down within five hundred feet of the village, where it disappeared; the line behind always advancing, and always disappearing, at the same spot. This continued for half an hour, the long line describing the curve of a horse-shoe; always coming into existence, and always vanishing at exactly the same places; traversing the space between with enormous swiftness. This cloud, ten miles off, would have looked like a perfectly motionless wreath, in the form of a horse-shoe, hanging over the hills.

To the region of the rain-cloud belong also all those phenomena of drifted smoke, heat-haze, local mists in the morning or evening; in valleys, or over water, mirage, white steaming vapour rising in evaporation from moist and open surfaces, and everything which visibly affects the condition of the atmosphere without actually assuming the form of cloud. These phenomena are as perpetual in all countries as they are beautiful, and afford by far the most effective and valuable means which the painter possesses, for modification of the forms of fixed objects. The upper clouds are distinct and comparatively opaque, they do not modify, but conceal; but through the rain-cloud, and its accessory phenomena, all that is beautiful may be made manifest, and all that is hurtful concealed; what is paltry may be made to look vast, and what is ponderous, aërial; mystery may be obtained without obscurity, and decoration without disguise. And, accordingly, nature herself uses it constantly, as one of her chief means of most perfect effect; not in one country, nor another, but everywhere—everywhere, at least, where there is anything worth

calling landscape. I cannot answer for the desert of the Sahara, but I know that there can be no greater mistake than supposing that delicate and variable effects of mist and rain-cloud are peculiar to northern climates. I have never seen in any place or country effects of mist more perfect than in the Campagna of Rome, and among the hills of Sorrento.

It is therefore matter of no little marvel to me, and I conceive that it can scarcely be otherwise to any reflecting person, that throughout the whole range of ancient landscape art, there occurs no instance of the painting of a real rain-cloud, still less of any of the more delicate phenomena characteristic of the region. "Storms" indeed, as the innocent public persist in calling such abuses of nature and abortions of art as the two windy Gaspars in our National Gallery, are common enough; massive concretions of ink and indigo, wrung and twisted very hard, apparently in a vain effort to get some moisture out of them; bearing up courageously and successfully against a wind whose effects on the trees in the foreground can be accounted for only on the supposition that they are all of the Indian-rubber species. Enough of this in all conscience, we have, and to spare; but for the legitimate rain-cloud, with its ragged and spray-like edge, its veilly transparency, and its columnar burden of blessing, neither it, nor anything like it, or approaching it, occurs in any painting of the old masters that I have ever seen; and I have seen enough to warrant my affirming that if it occur anywhere, it must be through accident rather than intention. Nor is there stronger evidence of any perception, on the part of these much respected artists, that there were such things in the world as mists or vapours. If a cloud under their direction ever touches a mountain, it does it effectually and as if it meant to do it. There is no mystifying the matter; here is a cloud, and there is a hill; if it is to come on at all, it comes on to some purpose, and there is no hope of its ever going off again. We have, therefore, little to say of the efforts of the old masters, in any scenes which might naturally have been connected with the clouds of the lowest

region, except that the faults of form specified in considering the central clouds, are, by way of being energetic or sublime, more glaringly and audaciously committed in their "storms;" and that what is a wrong form among clouds possessing form, is there given with increased generosity of fiction to clouds which have no form at all.

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It is difficult for us to conceive how any person can go to nature for a single day or hour, when she is really at work in any of her nobler spheres of action, and yet retain respect for the old masters; finding, as find he will, that every scene which rises, rests, or departs before him, bears with it a thousand glories of which there is not one shadow, one image, one trace or line, in any of their works; but which will illustrate to him, at every new instant, some passage which he had not before understood in the high works of modern art. Stand upon the peak of some isolated mountain at daybreak, when the night mists first rise from off the plains, and watch their white and lake-like fields as they float in level bays and winding gulfs about the islanded summits of the lower hills, untouched yet by more than dawn, colder and more quiet than a windless sea under the moon of midnight; watch when the first sunbeam is sent upon the silver channels, how the foam of their undulating surface parts and passes away; and down under their depths, the glittering city and green pasture lie like Atlantis, between the white paths of winding rivers; the flakes of light falling every moment faster and broader among the starry spires, as the wreathed surges break and vanish above them, and the confused crests and ridges of the dark hills shorten their grey shadows upon the plain.

Has Claude given this? Wait a little longer, and you shall see those scattered mists rallying in the ravines, and floating up towards you, along the winding valleys, till they couch in quiet masses, iridescent with the morning light,[1] upon the broad breasts of the higher hills, whose

[1] I have often seen the white thin, morning cloud, edged with the seven colours of the prism. I am not aware of the cause of this phenomenon, for it takes place not when we stand with our backs to

leagues of massy undulation will melt back and back into that robe of material light, until they fade away, lost in its lustre, to appear again above, in the serene heaven, like a wild, bright, impossible dream, foundationless and inaccessible, their very bases vanishing in the unsubstantial and mocking blue of the deep lake below.[1] Has Claude given this? Wait yet a little longer, and you shall see those mists gather themselves into white towers, and stand like fortresses along the promontories, massy and motionless, only piled with every instant higher and higher into the sky,[2] and casting longer shadows athwart the rocks; and out of the pale blue of the horizon you will see forming and advancing a troop of narrow, dark, pointed vapours,[3] which will cover the sky, inch by inch, with their grey network, and take the light off the landscape with an eclipse which will stop the singing of the birds and the motion of the leaves together; and then you will see horizontal bars of black shadow forming under them, and lurid wreaths create themselves, you know not how, along the shoulders of the hills; you never see them form, but when you look back to a place which was clear an instant ago, there is a cloud on it, hanging by the precipices, as a hawk pauses over his prey.[4] Has Claude given this? And then you will hear the sudden rush of the awakened wind, and you will see those watch-towers of vapour swept away from their foundations, and waving curtains of opaque rain let down to the valleys, swinging from the burdened clouds in black, bending fringes,[5] or pacing in pale columns along the lake level, grazing its surface into foam as they go.

And then, as the sun sinks, you shall see the storm drift for an instant from off the hills, leaving their broad sides smoking, and loaded yet with snow-white torn, steamlike

the sun, but in clouds near the sun itself, irregularly and over indefinite spaces, sometimes taking place in the body of the cloud. The colours are distinct and vivid, but have a kind of metallic lustre upon them.

[1] Lake Lucerne.

[2] St. Maurice (Rogers's *Italy*).

[3] Vignette, the Great St. Bernard.

[4] Vignette of the Andes.

[5] St. Michael's Mount: England series.

rags of capricious vapour, now gone, now gathered again;[1] while the smouldering sun, seeming not far away, but burning like a red-hot ball beside you, and as if you could reach it, plunges through the rushing wind and rolling cloud with headlong fall, as if it meant to rise no more, dyeing all the air about it with blood.[2] Has Claude given this? And then you shall hear the fainting tempest die in the hollow of the night, and you shall see a green halo kindling on the summit of the eastern hills,[3] brighter—brighter yet, till the large white circle of the slow moon is lifted up among the barred clouds,[4] step by step, line by line; star after star she quenches with her kindling light, setting in their stead an army of pale, penetrable, fleecy wreaths in the heaven, to give light upon the earth, which move together, hand in hand, company by company, troop by troop, so measured in their unity of motion, that the whole heaven seems to roll with them, and the earth to reel under them.

Ask Claude, or his brethren, for that. And then wait yet for one hour, until the East again becomes purple,[5] and the heaving mountains, rolling against it in darkness, like waves of a wild sea, are drowned one by one in the glory of its burning; watch the white glaciers blaze in their winding paths about the mountains, like mighty serpents with scales of fire; watch the columnar peaks of solitary snow, kindling downwards, chasm by chasm, each in itself a new morning; their long avalanches cast down in keen streams brighter than the lightning, sending each his tribute of driven snow, like altar-smoke, up to the heaven; the rose-light of their silent domes flushing that heaven about them and above them, piercing with purer light through its purple lines of lifted cloud, casting a new glory on every wreath as it passes by, until the whole heaven —one scarlet canopy,—is interwoven with a roof of waving

[1] Illustration to *The Antiquary*. Goldau, a recent drawing of the highest order.

[2] Vignette to Campbell's *Last Man*.

[3] Caerlaverock.

[4] St. Denis.

[5] Alps at Daybreak (Rogers's *Poems*): Delphi, and various vignettes.

flame, and tossing, vault beyond vault, as with the drifted wings of many companies of angels: and then, when you can look no more for gladness, and when you are bowed down with fear and love of the Maker and Doer of this, tell me who has best delivered this His message unto men!

11. Mountain and Plain.

Mountains are, to the rest of the body of the earth, what violent muscular action is to the body of man. The muscles and tendons of its anatomy are, in the mountain, brought out with fierce and convulsive energy, full of expression, passion, and strength; the plains and the lower hills are the repose and the effortless motion of the frame, when its muscles lie dormant and concealed beneath the lines of its beauty, yet ruling those lines in their every undulation. This, then, is the first grand principle of the truth of the earth. The spirit of the hills is action; that of the lowlands, repose; and between these there is to be found every variety of motion and of rest; from the inactive plain, sleeping like the firmament, with cities for stars, to the fiery peaks, which, with heaving bosoms and exulting limbs, with the clouds drifting like hair from their bright foreheads, lift up their Titan hands to Heaven, saying, "I live for ever!"

But there is this difference between the action of the earth, and that of a living creature; that while the exerted limb marks its bones and tendons through the flesh, the excited earth casts off the flesh altogether, and its bones come out from beneath. Mountains are the bones of the earth, their highest peaks are invariably those parts of its anatomy which in the plains lie buried under five and twenty thousand feet of solid thickness of superincumbent soil, and which spring up in the mountain ranges in vast pyramids or wedges, flinging their garment of earth away from them on each side. The masses of the lower hills are laid over and against their sides, like the masses of lateral masonry against the skeleton arch of an unfinished bridge, except that they slope up to and lean against the central ridge: and, finally,

upon the slopes of these lower hills are strewed the level beds of sprinkled gravel, sand, and clay, which form the extent of the champaign. Here then is another grand principle of the truth of earth, that the mountains must come from under all, and be the support of all; and that everything else must be laid in their arms, heap above heap, the plains being the uppermost. Opposed to this truth is every appearance of the hills being laid upon the plains, or built upon them. Nor is this a truth only of the earth on a large scale, for every minor rock (in position) comes out from the soil about it as an island out of the sea, lifting the earth near it like waves beating on its sides.

Such being the structure of the framework of the earth, it is next to be remembered that all soil whatsoever, wherever it is accumulated in greater quantity than is sufficient to nourish the moss or the wallflower, has been so, either by the direct transporting agency of water, or under the guiding influence and power of water. All plains capable of cultivation are deposits from some kind of water—some from swift and tremendous currents, leaving their soil in sweeping banks and furrowed ridges—others, and this is in mountain districts almost invariably the case, by slow deposit from a quiet lake in the mountain hollow, which has been gradually filled by the soil carried into it by streams, which soil is of course finally left spread at the exact level of the surface of the former lake, as level as the quiet water itself. Hence we constantly meet with plains in hill districts, which fill the hollows of the hills with as perfect and faultless a level as water, and out of which the steep rocks rise at the edge with as little previous disturbance, or indication of their forms beneath, as they do from the margin of a quiet lake. Every delta—and there is one at the head of every lake in every hill district—supplies an instance of this. The rocks at Altorf plunge beneath the plain, which the lake has left, at as sharp an angle as they do into the lake itself beside the chapel of Tell. The plain of the Arve, at Sallenche, is terminated so sharply by the hills to the south-east, that I have seen a man sleeping with his back supported against the mountain, and his legs stretched on the plain; the slope

which supported his back rising five thousand feet above him, and the couch of his legs stretched for five miles before him. In distant effect these champaigns lie like deep, blue, undisturbed water, while the mighty hills around them burst out from beneath, raging and tossing like a tumultuous sea. The valleys of Meyringen, Interlachen, Altorf, Sallenche, St. Jean de Maurienne; the great plain of Lombardy itself, as seen from Milan or Padua, under the Alps, the Euganeans, and the Apennines; and the Campo Felice under Vesuvius, are a few, out of the thousand instances, which must occur at once to the mind of every traveller.

Let the reader now open Rogers's *Italy*, at the seventeenth page, and look at the vignette which heads it of the Battle of Marengo. It needs no comment. It cannot but carry with it, after what has been said, the instant conviction that Turner is as much of a geologist as he is of a painter. It is a summary of all we have been saying, and a summary so distinct and clear, that without any such explanation it must have forced upon the mind the impression of such facts—of the plunging of the hills underneath the plain—of the perfect level and repose of this latter laid in their arms, and of the tumultuous action of the emergent summits.

We find, according to this its internal structure, which, I believe, with the assistance of Turner, can scarcely now be misunderstood, that the earth may be considered as divided into three great classes of formation, which geology has already named for us. Primary—the rocks, which, though in position lower than all others, rise to form the central peaks, or interior nuclei of all mountain ranges. Secondary—the rocks which are laid in beds above these, and which form the greater proportion of all hill scenery. Tertiary—the light beds of sand, gravel, and clay, which are strewed upon the surface of all, forming plains and habitable territory for man. We shall find it convenient, in examining the truth of art, to adopt, with a little modification, the geological arrangement, considering first, the formation and character of the highest or central peaks; the general structure of the lower mountains, including in this division those composed of the various slates which a geologist would

call primary; and, lastly, the minutiæ and most delicate characters of the beds of these hills, when they are so near as to become foreground objects, and the structure of the common soil which usually forms the greater space of an artist's foreground. Hence our task will arrange itself into three divisions—the investigation of the central mountains, of the inferior mountains, and of the foreground.

12. The Mountain Snows.

In the range of inorganic nature, I doubt if any object can be found more perfectly beautiful than a fresh, deep snow-drift, seen under warm light. Its curves are of inconceivable perfection and changefulness, its surface and transparency alike exquisite, its light and shade of inexhaustible variety and inimitable finish, the shadows sharp, pale, and of heavenly colour, the reflected lights intense and multitudinous, and mingled with the sweet occurrences of transmitted light. No mortal hand can approach the majesty or loveliness of it, yet it is possible by care and skill at least to suggest the preciousness of its forms and intimate the nature of its light and shade; but this has never been attempted; it could not be done except by artists of a rank exceedingly high, and there is something about the feeling of snow in ordinary scenery which such men do not like. But when the same qualities are exhibited on a magnificent Alpine scale and in a position where they interfere with no feeling of life, I see not why they should be neglected, as they have hitherto been, unless that the difficulty of reconciling the brilliancy of snow with a picturesque light and shade, is so great that most good artists disguise or avoid the greater part of upper Alpine scenery, and hint at the glacier so slightly, that they do not feel the necessity of careful study of its forms. Habits of exaggeration increase the evil; I have seen a sketch from nature, by one of the most able of our landscape painters, in which a cloud had been mistaken for a snowy summit, and the hint thus taken exaggerated, as was likely, into an

enormous mass of impossible height and unintelligent form, when the mountain itself for which the cloud had been mistaken, though subtending an angle of about eighteen or twenty degrees, instead of the fifty attributed to it, was of a form so exquisite that it might have been a lesson to Phidias. Nothing but failure can result from such methods of sketching, nor have I ever seen a single instance of an earnest study of snowy mountains by any one. Hence, wherever they are introduced, their drawing is utterly unintelligent, the forms being those of white rocks, or of rocks lightly powdered with snow, showing sufficiently that not only the painters have never studied the mountain carefully from below, but that they have never climbed into the snowy region. Harding's rendering of the high Alps (vide the engraving of Chamonix, and of the Wengern Alp, in the illustrations to Byron) is best; but even he shows no perception of the real anatomy. Stanfield paints only white rocks instead of snow. Turner invariably avoids the difficulty, though he has shown himself capable of grappling with it in the ice of the *Liber Studiorum* (Mer de Glace) which is very cold and slippery; but of the crusts and wreaths of the higher snow he has taken no cognizance. Even the vignettes to Rogers's *Poems* fail in this respect. It would be vain to attempt in this place to give any detailed account of the phenomena of the upper snows; but it may be well to note those general principles which every artist ought to keep in mind when he has to paint an Alp.

Snow is modified by the under forms of the hill in some sort as dress is by the anatomy of the human frame. And as no dress can be well laid on without conceiving the body beneath, so no Alp can be drawn unless its under form is conceived first, and its snow laid on afterwards.

Every high Alp has as much snow upon it as it can hold or carry: it is not, observe, a mere coating of snow of given depth throughout, but it is snow loaded on until the rocks can hold no more. The surplus does not fall in the winter, because, fastened by continual frost, the quantity of snow which an Alp can carry is greater than each single winter can bestow; it falls in the first mild days of spring in

enormous avalanches. Afterwards the melting continues, gradually removing from all the steep rocks the small quantity of snow which was all they could hold, and leaving them black and bare among the accumulated fields of unknown depth, which occupy the capacious valleys and less inclined superficies of the mountain.

Hence it follows that the deepest snow does not take nor indicate the actual forms of the rocks on which it lies, but it hangs from peak to peak in unbroken and sweeping festoons, or covers whole groups of peaks, which afford it sufficient hold, with vast and unbroken domes: these festoons and domes being guided in their curves, and modified in size, by the violence and prevalent direction of the winter winds.

We have, therefore, every variety of indication of the under mountain form; first the mere coating which is soon to be withdrawn, and which shows as a mere sprinkling or powdering after a storm on the higher peaks; then the shallow incrustation on the steep sides glazed by the running down of its frequent meltings, frozen again in the night; then the deeper snow more or less cramped or modified by sudden eminences of emergent rock, or hanging in fractured festoons and huge blue irregular cliffs on the mountain flanks, and over the edges and summits of their precipices in nodding drifts, far overhanging, like a cornice (perilous things to approach the edge of from above); finally, the pure accumulation of overwhelming depth, smooth, sweeping, and almost cleftless, and modified only by its lines of drifting. Countless phenomena of exquisite beauty belong to each of these conditions, not to speak of the transition of the snow into ice at lower levels; but all on which I shall at present insist is that the artist should not think of his Alp merely as a white mountain, but conceive it as a group of peaks loaded with an accumulation of snow, and that especially he should avail himself of the exquisite curvatures, never failing, by which the snow unites and opposes the harsh and broken lines of the rock. I shall enter into farther detail on this subject hereafter; at present it is useless to do so, as I have no examples to refer to, either in ancient or modern art. No statement of these

facts has hitherto been made, nor any evidence given even of their observation, except by the most inferior painters.[1]

Various works in green and white appear from time to time on the walls of the Academy, *like* the Alps indeed, but so frightfully like, that we shudder and sicken at the sight of them, as we do when our best friend shows us into his dining-room, to see a portrait of himself, which "everybody thinks very like." We should be glad to see fewer of these, for Switzerland is quite beyond the power of any but first-rate men, and is exceedingly bad practice for a rising artist; but let us express a hope that Alpine scenery will not continue to be neglected as it has been, by those who alone are capable of treating it. We love Italy, but we have had rather a surfeit of it lately;—too many peaked caps and flat-headed pines. We should be very grateful to Harding and Stanfield if they would refresh us a little among the snow, and give us, what we believe them to be capable of giving us, a faithful expression of Alpine ideal. We are well aware of the pain inflicted on an artist's mind by the preponderance of black, and white, and green, over more available colours; but there is nevertheless in generic Alpine scenery, a fountain of feeling yet unopened—a chord of harmony yet untouched by art. It will be struck by the first man who can separate what is national, in Switzerland, from what is ideal. We do not want chalets and three-legged stools, cow-bells and buttermilk. We want the pure and holy hills, treated as a link between heaven and earth.

13. Turner's Rock-Drawing.

THE Upper Fall of the Tees, Yorkshire, engraved in the England series, may be given as a standard example of rock-drawing. We have, in the great face of rock which divides the two streams, horizontal lines which indicate the real direction of the strata, and these same lines are given in

[1] I hear of some study of Alpine scenery among the professors at Geneva; but all foreign landscape that I have ever met with has been so utterly ignorant, that I hope for nothing except from our own painters.

ascending perspective all along the precipice on the right. But we see also on the central precipice fissures absolutely vertical, which inform us of one series of joints dividing these horizontal strata; and the exceeding smoothness and evenness of the precipice itself inform us that it has been caused by a great separation of substance in the direction of another more important line of joints, running in a direction across the river. Accordingly, we see on the left that the whole summit of the precipice is divided again and again by this great series of joints into vertical beds, which lie against each other with their sides toward us, and are traversed downwards by the same vertical lines traceable on the face of the central cliff. Now, let me direct especially attention to the way in which Turner has marked over this general and grand unity of structure, the modifying effects of the weather and the torrent.

Observe how the whole surface of the hill above the precipice on the left[1] is brought into one smooth, unbroken curvature of gentle convexity, until it comes to the edge of the precipice, and then, just on the angle, breaks into the multiplicity of fissure which marks its geological structure. Observe how every one of the separate blocks, into which it divides, is rounded and convex in its salient edges turned to the weather, and how every one of their inward angles is marked clear and sharp by the determined shadow and transparent reflex. Observe how exquisitely graceful are all the curves of the convex surfaces, indicating that every one of them has been modelled by the winding and undulating of running water; and how gradually they become steeper as they descend, until they are torn down into the face of the precipice.

Finally, observe the exquisite variety of all the touches which express fissure or shade; every one in varying directions and with new forms, and yet throughout indicating that perfect parallelism which at once explained to us the geology of the rock, and falling into one grand mass, treated with the same simplicity of light and shade which a great

[1] In the light between the waterfall and the large dark mass on the extreme right.

portrait painter adopts in treating the features of the human face; which, though each has its own separate chiaroscuro, never disturb the wholeness and grandeur of the head, considered as one ball or mass So here, one deep and marked piece of shadow indicates the greatest proximity of the rounded mass; and from this every shade becomes fainter and fainter, until all are lost in the obscurity and dimness of the hanging precipice and the shattering fall. Again, see how the same fractures just upon the edge take place with the central cliff above the right-hand fall, and how the force of the water is told us by the confusion of debris accumulated in its channel. In fact, the great quality about Turner's drawings which more especially proves their transcendent truth, is the capability they afford us of reasoning on past and future phenomena, just as if we had the actual rocks before us; for this indicates not that one truth is given, nor another, not that a pretty or interesting morsel has been selected here and there, but that the whole truth has been given, with all the relations of its parts; so that we can pick and choose our points of pleasure or of thought for ourselves, and reason upon the whole with the same certainty which we should after having climbed and hammered over the rocks bit by bit.

With this drawing before him, a geologist could give a lecture upon the whole system of aqueous erosion, and speculate as safely upon the past and future states of this very spot, as if he were standing and getting wet with the spray. He would tell you at once, that the waterfall was in a state of rapid recession; that it had once formed a wide cataract just at the spot where the figure is sitting on the heap of debris; and that when it was there, part of it came down by the channel on the left, its bed being still marked by the delicately chiselled lines of fissure. He would tell you that the foreground had also once been the top of the fall, and that the vertical fissures on the right of it were evidently then the channel of a side stream. He would tell you that the fall was then much lower than it is now, and that being lower, it had less force, and cut itself a narrower bed; and that the spot where it reached the higher precipice

is marked by the expansion of the wide basin which its increased violence has excavated, and by the gradually increasing concavity of the rocks below, which we see have been hollowed into a complete vault by the elastic bound of the water. But neither he nor I could tell you with what exquisite and finished marking of every fragment and particle of soil or rock, both in its own structure and the evidence it bears of these great influences, the whole of this is confirmed and carried out.

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14. The Wonders of Water.

Of all inorganic substances, acting in their own proper nature, and without assistance or combination, water is the most wonderful. If we think of it as the source of all the changefulness and beauty which we have seen in clouds; then as the instrument by which the earth we have contemplated was modelled into symmetry, and its crags chiselled into grace; then as, in the form of snow, it robes the mountains it has made, with that transcendent light which we could not have conceived if we had not seen; then as it exists in the foam of the torrent—in the iris which spans it, in the morning mist which rises from it, in the deep crystalline pools which mirror its hanging shore, in the broad lake and glancing river; finally, in that which is to all human minds the best emblem of unwearied, unconquerable power, the wild, various, fantastic, tameless unity of the sea; what shall we compare to this mighty, this universal element, for glory and for beauty? or how shall we follow its eternal changefulness of feeling? It is like trying to paint a soul.

To suggest the ordinary appearance of calm water—to lay on canvass as much evidence of surface and reflection as may make us understand that water is meant—is, perhaps, the easiest task of art; and even ordinary running or falling water may be sufficiently rendered, by observing careful curves of projection with a dark ground, and breaking a little white over it, as we see done with judgment and truth by Ruysdael. But to paint the actual play of hue on the

reflective surface, or to give the forms and fury of water when it begins to show itself—to give the flashing and rocket-like velocity of a noble cataract, or the precision and grace of the sea wave, so exquisitely modelled, though so mockingly transient—so mountainous in its form, yet so cloud-like in its motion—with its variety and delicacy of colour, when every ripple and wreath has some peculiar passage of reflection upon itself alone, and the radiating and scintillating sunbeams are mixed with the dim hues of transparent depth and dark rock below;—to do this perfectly, is beyond the power of man; to do it even partially, has been granted to but one or two, even of those few who have dared to attempt it.

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It is not often, I believe, that an artist draws the reflections in water as he sees them; over large spaces, and in weather that is not very calm, it is nearly impossible to do so; when it is possible, sometimes in haste, and sometimes in idleness, and sometimes under the idea of improving nature, they are slurred or misrepresented; it is so easy to give something like a suggestive resemblance of calm water, that, even when the landscape is finished from nature, the water is merely indicated as something that may be done at any time; and then, in the home work, come the cold leaden greys with some, and the violent blues and greens with others, and the horizontal lines with the feeble, and the bright touches and sparkles with the dexterous, and everything that is shallow and commonplace with all. Now, the fact is, that there is hardly a road-side pond or pool which has not as much landscape *in* it as above it. It is not the brown, muddy, dull thing we suppose it to be; it has a heart like ourselves, and in the bottom of that there are the boughs of the tall trees, and the blades of the shaking grass, and all manner of hues, of variable, pleasant light out of the sky; nay, the ugly gutter, that stagnates over the drain bars, in the heart of the foul city, is not altogether base; down in that, if you will look deep enough, you may see the dark, serious blue of far-off sky, and the passing of pure clouds. It is at your own will that you see in that despised stream, either the refuse of the

street, or the image of the sky—so it is with almost all other things that we unkindly despise. Now, this far-seeing is just the difference between the great and the vulgar painter; the common man *knows* the road-side pool is muddy, and draws its mud; the great painter sees beneath and behind the brown surface what will take him a day's work to follow, but he follows it, cost what it will. And if painters would only go out to the nearest common, and take the nearest dirty pond among the furze, and draw that thoroughly, not considering that it is water that they are drawing, and that water must be done in a certain way; but drawing determinedly what they *see*, that is to say, all the trees, and their shaking leaves, and all the hazy passages of disturbing sunshine; and the bottom seen in the clearer little bits at the edge, and the stones of it, and all the sky, and the clouds far down in the middle, drawn as completely, and more delicately they must be, than the real clouds above, they would come home with such a notion of water-painting as might save me and every one else all trouble of writing more about the matter; but now they do nothing of the kind, but take the ugly, round, yellow surface for granted, or else improve it, and, instead of giving that refined, complex, delicate, but saddened and gloomy reflection in the polluted water, they clear it up with coarse flashes of yellow, and green, and blue, and spoil their own eyes, and hurt ours; failing, of course, still more hopelessly in touching the pure, inimitable light of waves thrown loose.

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Water of course, owing to its transparency, possesses not a perfectly reflective surface, like that of speculum metal, but a surface whose reflective power is dependent on the angle at which the rays to be reflected fall. The smaller this angle, the greater are the number of rays reflected. Now, according to the number of rays reflected is the force of the image of objects above, and according to the number of rays transmitted is the perceptibility of objects below the water. Hence the visible transparency and reflective power of water are in inverse ratio. In looking down into it from above, we receive transmitted rays which exhibit either

the bottom or the objects floating in the water; or else if the water be deep and clear, we receive very few rays, and the water looks black. In looking along water we receive reflected rays, and therefore the image of objects above it. Hence, in shallow water on a level shore the bottom is seen at our feet, clearly; it becomes more and more obscure as it retires, even though the water do not increase in depth, and at a distance of twelve or twenty yards—more or less according to our height above the water—becomes entirely invisible, lost in the lustre of the reflected surface.

The brighter the objects reflected, the larger the angle at which reflection is visible; it is always to be remembered that, strictly speaking, only light objects are reflected, and that the darker ones are seen only in proportion to the number of rays of light that they can send; so that a dark object comparatively loses its power to affect the surface of water, and the water in the space of a dark reflection is seen partially with the image of the object, and partially transparent. It will be found on observation that under a bank—suppose with dark trees above showing spaces of bright sky, the bright sky is reflected distinctly, and the bottom of the water is in those spaces not seen; but in the dark spaces of reflection we see the bottom of the water, and the colour of that bottom and of the water itself mingles with and modifies that of the colour of the trees casting the dark reflection.

This is one of the most beautiful circumstances connected with water surface, for by these means a variety of colour and a grace and evanescence are introduced in the reflection otherwise impossible. Of course at great distances even the darkest objects cast distinct images, and the hue of the water cannot be seen; but in near water the occurrence of its own colour modifying the dark reflections while it leaves light ones unaffected is of infinite value.

Take, by way of example, an extract from my own diary at Venice.

"May 17th, 4 p.m. Looking east the water is calm, and reflects the sky and vessels, with this peculiarity; the sky, which is pale blue, is in its reflection of the same kind of

blue, only a little deeper; but the *vessels' hulls, which are black, are reflected in pale sea green*, that is, the natural colour of the water under sunlight; while the *orange masts* of the vessels, wet with a recent shower, are reflected *without change of colour*, only not quite so bright as above. One ship has a white, another a red stripe (I ought to have said running horizontally along the gunwales), *of these the water takes no notice.*"

"What is curious, a boat passes across with white and dark figures, the water reflects the dark ones in green, and misses out all the white; this is chiefly owing to the dark images being opposed to the bright reflected sky."

"A boat swinging near the quay casts an apparent shadow on the rippled water. This appearance I find to be owing altogether to the increased *reflective* power of the water in the shaded space; for the farther sides of the ripples therein take the deep pure blue of the sky, coming strongly dark on the pale green, and the nearer sides take the pale grey of the cloud, hardly darker than the green."

I have left the last two paragraphs, because they will be useful to us presently; all that I wish to insist upon here is the showing of the local colour (pea green) of the water in the spaces which were occupied by dark reflections, and the unaltered colour of the bright ones.

Clear water takes no shadow, and that for two reasons; A perfect surface of speculum metal takes no shadow (this the reader may instantly demonstrate for himself), and a perfectly transparent body as air takes no shadow, hence water, whether transparent or reflective, takes no shadow.

But shadows, or the forms of them, appear on water frequently and sharply: it is necessary carefully to explain the causes of these, as they are one of the most eminent sources of error in water painting.

First; Water in shade is much more reflective than water in sunlight. Under sunlight the local colour of the water is commonly vigorous and active, and forcibly affects, as we have seen, all the dark reflections, commonly diminishing their depth. Under shade, the reflective power is in a high

degree increased,[1] and it will be found most frequently that the forms of shadows are expressed on the surface of water, not by actual shade, but by more genuine reflection of objects above. This is another most important and valuable circumstance, and we owe to it some phenomena of the highest beauty.

A very muddy river, as the Arno for instance at Florence, is seen during sunshine of its own yellow colour, rendering all reflections discoloured and feeble. At twilight it recovers its reflective power to the fullest extent, and the mountains of Carrara are seen reflected in it as clearly as if it were a crystalline lake. The Mediterranean, whose determined blue yields to hardly any modifying colour in day-time, receives at evening the image of its rocky shores. On our own seas, seeming shadows are seen constantly cast in purple and blue, upon pale green. These are no shadows, but the pure reflection of dark or blue sky above, seen in the shadowed space, refused by the local colour of the sea in the sun-lighted spaces, and turned more or less purple by the opposition of the vivid green.

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Stand for half an hour beside the fall of Schaffhausen, on the north side where the rapids are long, and watch how the vault of water first bends, unbroken, in pure, polished velocity, over the arching rocks at the brow of the cataract, covering them with a dome of crystal twenty feet thick—so swift that its motion is unseen except when a foam globe from above darts over it like a falling star; and how the trees are lighted above it under all their leaves, at the instant that it breaks into foam; and how all the hollows of that foam burn with green fire like so much shattering chrysoprase; and how, ever and anon, startling you with its white flash, a jet of spray leaps hissing out of the fall, like a rocket, bursting in the wind and driven away in dust, filling the air with light; and how, through the curdling wreaths of the restless, crashing abyss below, the blue of the water, paled

[1] I state this merely as a fact; I am unable satisfactorily to account for it on optical principles, and were it otherwise the investigation would be of little interest to the general reader, and little value to the artist.

by the foam in its body, shows purer than the sky through white rain-cloud; while the shuddering iris stoops in tremulous stillness over all, fading and flushing alternately through the choking spray and shattered sunshine, hiding itself at last among the thick golden leaves which toss to and fro in sympathy with the wild water; their dripping masses lifted at intervals, like sheaves of loaded corn, by some stronger gush from the cataract, and bowed again upon the mossy rocks as its roar dies away; the dew gushing from their thick branches through drooping clusters of emerald herbage, and sparkling in white threads along the dark rocks of the shore, feeding the lichens which chase and chequer them with purple and silver.

15. Turner's Water-Painting.

It will be remembered that it was said above, that Turner was the only painter who had ever represented the surface of calm or the *force* of agitated water. He obtains this expression of force in falling or running water by fearless and full rendering of its forms. He never loses himself and his subject in the splash of the fall—his presence of mind never fails as he goes down; he does not blind us with the spray, or veil the countenance of his fall with its own drapery. A little crumbling white, or lightly rubbed paper, will soon give the effect of indiscriminate foam; but nature gives more than foam—she shows beneath it, and through it, a peculiar character of exquisitely studied form bestowed on every wave and line of fall; and it is this variety of definite character which Turner always aims at, rejecting, as much as possible, everything that conceals or overwhelms it. Thus, in the Upper Fall of the Tees, though the whole basin of the fall is blue and dim with the rising vapour, yet the attention of the spectator is chiefly directed to the concentric zones and delicate curves of the falling water itself; and it is impossible to express with what exquisite accuracy these are given. They are the characteristic of a powerful stream descending without impediment or break, but from a narrow

channel, so as to expand as it falls. They are the constant form which such a stream assumes as it descends; and yet I think it would be difficult to point to another instance of their being rendered in art. You will find nothing in the waterfalls even of our best painters, but springing lines of parabolic descent, and splashing, shapeless foam; and, in consequence, though they may make you understand the swiftness of the water, they never let you feel the weight of it; the stream in their hands looks *active*, not *supine*, as if it leaped, not as if it fell.

Now water will leap a little way, it will leap down a weir or over a stone, but it *tumbles* over a high fall like this; and it is when we have lost the parabolic line, and arrived at the catenary—when we have lost the *spring* of the fall, and arrived at the *plunge* of it, that we begin really to feel its weight and wildness. Where water takes its first leap from the top, it is cool, and collected, and uninteresting, and mathematical; but it is when it finds that it has got into a scrape, and has farther to go than it thought for, that its character comes out: it is then that it begins to writhe, and twist, and sweep out, zone after zone, in wilder stretching as it falls, and to send down the rocket-like, lance-pointed, whizzing shafts at its sides, sounding for the bottom. And it is this prostration, this hopeless abandonment of its ponderous power to the air, which is always peculiarly expressed by Turner, and especially in the case before us; while our other artists, keeping to the parabolic line, where they do not lose themselves in smoke and foam, make their cataract look muscular and wiry, and may consider themselves fortunate if they can keep it from stopping. I believe the majesty of motion which Turner has given by these concentric catenary lines must be felt even by those who have never seen a high waterfall, and therefore cannot appreciate their exquisite fidelity to nature.

In the Chain Bridge over the Tees, this passiveness and swinging of the water to and fro are yet more remarkable; while we have another characteristic of a great waterfall given to us, that the wind, in this instance coming up the valley against the current, takes the spray up off the edges,

and carries it back in little torn, reverted rags and threads, seen in delicate form against the darkness on the left. But we must understand a little more about the nature of running water before we can appreciate the drawing either of this, or any other of Turner's torrents.

When water, not in very great body, runs in a rocky bed much interrupted by hollows, so that it can rest every now and then in a pool as it goes along, it does not acquire a continuous velocity of motion. It pauses after every leap, and curdles about, and rests a little, and then goes on again; and if in this comparatively tranquil and rational state of mind it meets with any obstacle, as a rock or stone, it parts on each side of it with a little bubbling foam, and goes round; if it comes to a step in its bed, it leaps it lightly, and then after a little plashing at the bottom, stops again to take breath. But if its bed be on a continuous slope, not much interrupted by hollows, so that it cannot rest, or if its own mass be so increased by flood that its usual resting-places are not sufficient for it, but that it is perpetually pushed out of them by the following current, before it has had time to tranquillize itself, it of course gains velocity with every yard that it runs; the impetus got at one leap is carried to the credit of the next, until the whole stream becomes one mass of unchecked, accelerating motion. Now when water in this state comes to an obstacle, it does not part at it, but clears it, like a race-horse; and when it comes to a hollow, it does not fill it up and run out leisurely at the other side, but it rushes down into it and comes up again on the other side, as a ship into the hollow of the sea. Hence the whole appearance of the bed of the stream is changed, and all the lines of the water altered in their nature. The quiet stream is a succession of leaps and pools; the leaps are light and springy, and parabolic, and make a great deal of splashing when they tumble into the pool; then we have a space of quiet curdling water, and another similar leap below.

But the stream when it has gained an impetus takes the shape of its bed, never stops, is equally deep and equally swift everywhere, goes down into every hollow, not with a

leap, but with a swing, not foaming, nor splashing, but in the bending line of a strong sea-wave, and comes up again on the other side, over rock and ridge, with the ease of a bounding leopard; if it meet a rock three or four feet above the level of its bed, it will neither part nor foam, nor express any concern about the matter, but clear it in a smooth dome of water, without apparent exertion, coming down again as smoothly on the other side; the whole surface of the surge being drawn into parallel lines by its extreme velocity, but foamless, except in places where the form of the bed opposes itself at some direct angle to such a line of fall, and causes a breaker; so that the whole river has the appearance of a deep and raging sea, with this only difference, that the torrent-waves always break backwards, and sea-waves forwards.

Thus, then, in the water which has gained an impetus, we have the most exquisite arrangements of curved lines, perpetually changing from convex to concave, and *vice versa*, following every swell and hollow of the bed with their modulating grace, and all in unison of motion, presenting perhaps the most beautiful series of inorganic forms which nature can possibly produce; for the sea runs too much into similar and concave curves with sharp edges, but every motion of the torrent is united, and all its curves are modifications of beautiful line.

We see, therefore, why Turner seizes on these curved lines of the torrent, not only as being among the most beautiful forms of nature, but because they are an instant expression of the utmost power and velocity, and tell us how the torrent has been flowing before we see it. For the leap and splash might be seen in the sudden freakishness of a quiet stream, or the fall of a rivulet over a mill-dam; but the undulating line is the *exclusive* attribute of the mountain-torrent,[1] whose

[1] On a large scale it is so, but the same lines are to be seen for the moment whenever water becomes exceedingly rapid, and yet feels the bottom as it passes, being not thrown up or cast clear of it. In general, the drawing of water fails from being too interrupted, the forms flung hither and thither, and broken up and covered with bright touches, instead of being wrought out in their real unities of curvature. It is difficult enough to draw a curved surface, even when it is rough and has texture; but to indicate the varied and sweeping forms of a crystalline

fall and fury have made the valleys echo for miles; and thus the moment we see one of its curves over a stone in the foreground, we know how far it has come, and how fiercely. And in the drawing we have been speaking of, the Lower Fall of the Tees, in the foreground of the Killiecrankie and Rhymer's Glen, and of the St. Maurice, in Rogers's *Italy*, we shall find the most exquisite instances of the use of such lines; but the most perfect of all in the Llanthony Abbey, which may be considered as the standard of torrent-drawing.

The chief light of the picture here falls upon the surface of the stream, swelled by recent rain, and its mighty waves come rolling down close to the spectator, green and clear, but pale with anger, in broad, unbroken, oceanic curves, bending into each other without break, though jets of fiery spray are cast into the air along the rocky shore, and rise in the sunshine in dusty vapour. The whole surface is one united race of mad motion; all the waves dragged, as I have described, into lines and furrows by their swiftness; and every one of these fine forms is drawn with the most studied chiaroscuro of delicate colour, greys and greens, as silvery and pure as the finest passages of Paul Veronese, and with a refinement of execution which the eye strains itself in looking into. The rapidity and gigantic force of this torrent, the exquisite refinement of its colour, and the vividness of foam which is obtained through a general middle tint, render it about the most perfect piece of painting of running water in existence.

and polished substance, requires far more skill and patience than most artists possess. In some respects, it is impossible. I do not suppose any means of art are capable of rightly expressing the smooth, multitudinous rippling of a rapid rivulet of shallow water, giving transparency, lustre, and fully-developed form; and the greater number of the lines and actions of torrent-waves are equally inimitable. The effort should, nevertheless, always be made, and whatever is sacrificed in colour, freedom, or brightness, the real contours ought always in some measure to be drawn, as a careful draughtsman secures those of flesh, or any other finely-modelled surface. It is better, in many respects, the drawing should miss of being *like* water, than that it should miss in this one respect the grandeur of water. Many tricks of scratching and dashing will bring out a deceptive resemblance; the determined and laborious rendering of contour alone secures sublimity.

Now this picture is full of expression of every kind of motion: the clouds are in wild haste; the sun is gleaming fast and fitfully through the leaves; the rain drifting away along the hillside; and the torrent, the principal object, to complete the impression, is made the wildest thing of all; and not only wild before us, and with us, but bearing with it in its every motion, from its long course, the record of its rage. Observe how differently Turner uses his torrent when the spirit of the picture is repose. In the Mercury and Argus, we have also a stream in the foreground; but, in coming down to us, we see it stopping twice in two quiet and glassy pools, upon which the drinking cattle cast an unstirred image. From the nearest of these, the water leaps in three cascades into another basin close to us; it trickles in silver threads through the leaves at its edge, and falls tinkling and splashing (though in considerable body) into the pool, stirring its quiet surface, at which a bird is stooping to drink, with concentric and curdling ripples, which divide round the stone at its farthest border, and descend in sparkling foam over the lip of the basin. Thus we find, in every case, the system of Turner's truth entirely unbroken, each phase and phenomenon of nature being recorded exactly where it is most valuable and impressive.

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More determined efforts have at all periods been made in sea painting than in torrent painting, yet less successful. As above stated, it is easy to obtain a resemblance of broken running water by tricks and dexterities, but the sea *must* be legitimately drawn; it cannot be given as utterly disorganized and confused, its weight and mass must be expressed, and the efforts at expression of it end in failure with all but the most powerful men; even with these few a partial success must be considered worthy of the highest praise.

As the right rendering of the Alps depends on power of drawing snow, so the right painting of the sea must depend, at least in all coast scenery, in no small measure on the power of drawing foam. Yet there are two conditions of foam of invariable occurrence on breaking waves, of which

I have never seen the slightest record attempted; first the thick creamy curdling overlapping massy form which remains for a moment only after the fall of the wave, and is seen in perfection in its running up the beach; and secondly, the thin white coating into which this subsides, which opens into oval gaps and clefts, marbling the waves over their whole surface, and connecting the breakers on a flat shore by long dragging streams of white.

It is evident that the difficulty of expressing either of these two conditions must be immense. The lapping and curdling foam is difficult enough to catch even when the lines of its undulation alone are considered; but the lips, so to speak, which lie along these lines, are full, projecting, and marked by beautiful light and shade; each has its high light, a gradation into shadow of indescribable delicacy, a bright reflected light, and a dark cast shadow; to draw all this requires labour, and care, and firmness of work, which, as I imagine, must always, however skilfully bestowed, destroy all impressions of wildness, accidentalism, and evanescence, and so kill the sea. Again, the openings in the thin subsided foam in their irregular modifications of circular and oval shapes dragged hither and thither, would be hard enough to draw, even if they could be seen on a flat surface; instead of which, every one of the openings is seen in undulation on a tossing surface, broken up over small surges and ripples, and so thrown into perspectives of the most hopeless intricacy. Now it is not easy to express the fall of a pattern with oval openings on the folds of drapery. I do not know that any one under the mark of Veronese or Titian could even do this as it ought to be done, yet in drapery much stiffness and error may be overlooked; not so in sea—the slightest inaccuracy, the slightest want of flow and freedom in the line, is attached by the eye in a moment of high treason, and I believe success to be impossible.

Yet there is not a wave or any violently agitated sea on which both these forms do not appear; the latter especially, after some time of storm, extends over their whole surfaces: the reader sees, therefore, why I said that sea could only be painted by means of more or less dexterous conven-

tionalism, since two of its most enduring phenomena cannot be represented at all.

Again, as respects the form of breakers on an even shore there is difficulty of no less formidable kind. There is in them an irreconcilable mixture of fury and formalism. Their hollow surface is marked by parallel lines, like those of a smooth mill-weir, and graduated by reflected and transmitted lights of the most wonderful intricacy, its curve being at the same time necessarily of mathematical purity and precision; yet at the top of this curve, when it nods over, there is a sudden laxity and giving way, the water swings and jumps along the ridge like a shaken chain, and the motion runs from part to part as it does through a serpent's body. Then the wind is at work on the extreme edge, and instead of letting it fling itself off naturally, it supports it, and drives it back, or scrapes it off, and carries it bodily away; so that the spray at the top is in a continual transition between forms projected by their own weight, and forms blown and carried off with their weight overcome; then at last, when it has come down, who shall say what shape that may be called, which shape has none, of the great crash where it touches the beach.

I think it is that last crash which is the great taskmaster. Nobody can do anything with it. I have seen Copley Fielding come very close to the jerk and nod of the lifted threatening edge, curl it very successfully, and without any look of its having been in papers, down nearly to the beach, but the final fall has no thunder in it. Turner has tried hard for it once or twice, but it will not do. The moment is given in the Sidon of the Bible Illustrations, and more elaborately in a painting of Bamborough; in both these cases there is little foam at the bottom, and the fallen breaker looks like a wall; yet grand always, and in the latter picture very beautifully assisted in expression by the tossing of a piece of cable, which some figures are dragging ashore, and which the breaker flings into the air as it rises. Perhaps the most successful rendering of the forms was in the Hero and Leander, but there the drawing was rendered easier by the powerful effect of light which disguised the foam.

It is not, however, from the shore that Turner usually studies his sea. Seen from the land, the curl of the breakers, even in nature, is somewhat uniform and monotonous; the size of the waves out at sea is uncomprehended, and those nearer the eye seem to succeed and resemble each other, to move slowly to the beach, and to break in the same lines and forms.

Afloat even twenty yards from the shore, we receive a totally different impression. Every wave around us appears vast—every one different from all the rest—and the breakers present, now that we see them with their backs towards us, the grand, extended, and varied lines of long curvature, which are peculiarly expressive both of velocity and power. Recklessness, before unfelt, is manifested in the mad, perpetual, changeful, undirected motion, not of wave after wave, as it appears from the shore, but of the very same water rising and falling. Of waves that successively approach and break, each appears to the mind a separate individual, whose part being performed, it perishes, and is succeeded by another; and there is nothing in this to impress us with the idea of restlessness, any more than in any successive and continuous functions of life and death. But it is when we perceive that it is no succession of wave, but the same water, constantly rising, and crashing, and recoiling, and rolling in again in new forms and with fresh fury, that we perceive the perturbed spirit, and feel the intensity of its unwearied rage. The sensation of power is also trebled; for not only is the vastness of apparent size much increased, but the whole action is different; it is not a passive wave, rolling sleepily forward until it tumbles heavily, prostrated upon the beach; but a sweeping exertion of tremendous and living strength, which does not now appear to *fall*, but to *burst* upon the shore; which never perishes, but recoils and recovers.

Aiming at these grand characters of the Sea, Turner almost always places the spectator not on the shore, but twenty or thirty yards from it, beyond the first range of the breakers, as in the Land's End, Fowey, Dunbar, and Laugharne. The latter has been well engraved, and may

be taken as a standard of the expression of fitfulness and power. The grand division of the whole space of the sea by a few dark continuous furrows of tremendous swell (the breaking of one of which alone has strewed the rocks in front with ruin), furnishes us with an estimate of space and strength, which at once reduces the men upon the shore to insects; and yet through this terrific simplicity there are indicated a fitfulness and fury in the tossing of the individual lines, which give to the whole sea a wild, unwearied, reckless incoherency, like that of an enraged multitude, whose masses act together in phrenzy, while not one individual feels as another. Especial attention is to be directed to the flatness of all the lines, for the same principle holds in sea which we have seen in mountains. All the size and sublimity of nature are given not by the height, but by the breadth of her masses: and Turner, by following her in her sweeping lines, while he does not lose the elevation of its surges, adds in a tenfold degree to their power.

Farther, observe the peculiar expression of *weight* which there is in Turner's waves, precisely of the same kind which we saw in his waterfall. We have not a cutting, springing, elastic line—no jumping or leaping in the waves: *that* is the characteristic of Chelsea Reach or Hampstead Ponds in a storm. But the surges roll and plunge with such prostration and hurling of their mass against the shore, that we feel the rocks are shaking under them; and, to add yet more to this impression, observe how little, comparatively, they are broken by the wind; above the floating wood, and along the shore, we have indication of a line of torn spray; but it is a mere fringe along the ridge of the surge—no interference with its gigantic body. The wind has no power over its tremendous unity of force and weight. Finally, observe how, on the rocks on the left, the violence and swiftness of the rising wave are indicated by precisely the same lines which we saw were indicative of fury in the torrent. The water on these rocks is the body of the wave which has just broken, rushing up over them; and in doing so, like the torrent, it does not break, nor foam, nor part upon the rock, but accommodates itself to every one of its

swells and hollows, with undulating lines, whose grace and variety might alone serve us for a day's study; and it is only where two streams of this rushing water meet in the hollow of the rock, that their force is shown by the vertical bound of the spray.

In the distance of this grand picture, there are two waves which entirely depart from the principle observed by all the rest, and spring high into the air. They have a message for us which it is important that we should understand. Their leap is not a preparation for breaking, neither is it caused by their meeting with a rock. It is caused by their encounter with the recoil of the preceding wave. When a large surge, in the act of breaking, just as it curls over, is hurled against the face either of a wall or of a vertical rock, the sound of the blow is not a crash, nor a roar; it is a report as loud as, and in every respect similar to, that of a great gun, and the wave is dashed back from the rock with force scarcely diminished, but reversed in direction—it now recedes from the shore, at the instant that it encounters the following breaker; the result is the vertical bound of both which is here rendered by Turner. Such a recoiling wave will proceed out to sea through ten or twelve ranges of following breakers, before it is overpowered. The effect of the encounter is more completely and palpably given in the Quillebœuf, in the *Rivers of France*. It is peculiarly instructive here, as informing us of the nature of the coast, and the force of the waves, far more clearly than any spray about the rocks themselves could have done.

But the effect of the blow at the shore itself is given in the Land's End, and vignette to Lycidas. Under favourable circumstances, with an advancing tide under a heavy gale, where the breakers feel the shore underneath them a moment before they touch the rock, so as to nod over when they strike, the effect is nearly incredible except to an eye-witness. I have seen the whole body of the wave rise in one white, vertical, broad fountain, eighty feet above the sea, half of it beaten so fine as to be carried away by the wind, the rest turning in the air when exhausted, and falling back with a weight and crash like that of an enormous waterfall. This

is given most completely in the Lycidas, and the blow of a less violent wave among broken rocks, not meeting it with an absolute wall, along the shore of the Land's End.

This last picture is a study of sea whose whole organization has been broken up by constant recoils from a rocky coast. The Laugharne gives the surge and weight of the ocean in a gale, on a comparatively level shore; but the Land's End, the entire disorder of the surges when every one of them, divided and entangled among promontories as it rolls in, and beaten back part by part from walls of rock on this side and that side, recoils like the defeated division of a great army, throwing all behind it into disorder, breaking up the succeeding waves into vertical ridges, which in their turn, yet more totally shattered upon the shore, retire in more hopeless confusion; until the whole surface of the sea becomes one dizzy whirl of rushing, writhing, tortured, undirected rage, bounding, and crashing, and coiling in an anarchy of enormous power; subdivided into myriads of waves, of which every one is not, be it remembered, a separate surge, but part and portion of a vast one, actuated by internal power, and giving in every direction the mighty undulation of impetuous line which glides over the rocks and writhes in the wind, overwhelming the one, and piercing the other with the form, fury, and swiftness of a sheet of lambent fire. And throughout the rendering of all this, there is not one false curve given, not one which is not the perfect expression of visible motion; and the forms of the infinite sea are drawn throughout with that utmost mastery of art which, through the deepest study of every line, makes every line appear the wildest child of chance, while yet each is in itself a subject and a picture different from all else around. Of the colour of this magnificent sea I have before spoken; it is a solemn green grey (with its foam seen dimly through the darkness of twilight), modulated with the fulness, changefulness, and sadness of a deep, wild melody.

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But, I think, the noblest sea that Turner has ever painted, and, if so, the noblest certainly ever painted by man, is that of the Slave Ship, the chief Academy picture of the Exhibi-

tion of 1840. It is a sunset on the Atlantic, after prolonged storm; but the storm is partially lulled, and the torn and streaming rain-clouds are moving in scarlet lines to lose themselves in the hollow of the night. The whole surface of sea included in the picture is divided into two ridges of enormous swell, not high, nor local, but a low, broad heaving of the whole ocean, like the lifting of its bosom by deep-drawn breath after the torture of the storm. Between these two ridges the fire of the sunset falls along the trough of the sea, dyeing it with an awful but glorious light, the intense and lurid splendour which burns like gold, and bathes like blood. Along this fiery path and valley, the tossing waves by which the swell of the sea is restlessly divided, lift themselves in dark, indefinite, fantastic forms, each casting a faint and ghastly shadow behind it along the illumined foam. They do not rise everywhere, but three or four together in wild groups, fitfully and furiously, as the under strength of the swell compels or permits them; leaving between them treacherous spaces of level and whirling water, now lighted with green and lamp-like fire, now flashing back the gold of the declining sun, now fearfully dyed from above with the indistinguishable images of the burning clouds, which fall upon them in flakes of crimson and scarlet, and give to the reckless waves the added motion of their own fiery flying. Purple and blue, the lurid shadows of the hollow breakers are cast upon the mist of the night, which gathers cold and low, advancing like the shadow of death upon the guilty[1] ship as it labours amidst the lightning of the sea, its thin masts written upon the sky in lines of blood, girded with condemnation in that fearful hue which signs the sky with horror, and mixes its flaming flood with the sunlight—and cast far along the desolate heave of the sepulchral waves, incarnadines the multitudinous sea.

I believe, if I were reduced to rest Turner's immortality upon any single work, I should choose this. Its daring conception—ideal in the highest sense of the word—is based on the purest truth, and wrought out with the concentrated

[1] She is a slaver, throwing her slaves overboard. The near sea is encumbered with corpses.

knowledge of a life; its colour is absolutely perfect, not one false or morbid hue in any part or line, and so modulated that every square inch of canvass is a perfect composition; its drawing as accurate as fearless; the ship buoyant, bending, and full of motion; its tones as true as they are wonderful;[1] and the whole picture dedicated to the most sublime of subjects and impressions—(completing thus the perfect system of all truth, which we have shown to be formed by Turner's works)—the power, majesty, and deathfulness of the open, deep, illimitable sea.

16. The Forest Trees.

I DO not mean to include every kind of foliage which by any accident can find its way into a picture, but the ordinary trees of Europe—oak, elm, ash, hazel, willow, birch, beech, poplar, chestnut, pine, mulberry, olive, ilex, carubbe, and such others. I do not purpose to examine the characteristics of each tree; it will be enough to observe the laws common to all.

First, then, neither the stems nor the boughs of any of the above trees *taper*, except where they fork. Wherever a stem sends off a branch, or a branch a lesser bough, or a lesser bough a bud, the stem or the branch is, on the instant, less in diameter by the exact quantity of the branch or the bough they have sent off, and they remain of the same diameter; or if there be any change, rather increase than diminish until

[1] There is a piece of tone of the same kind, equal in one part, but not so united with the rest of the picture, in the storm scene illustrative of *The Antiquary*—a sunset light on polished sea. I ought to have particularly mentioned the sea in the Lowestoffe, as a piece of the cutting motion of shallow water, under storm, altogether in grey, which should be especially contrasted, as a piece of colour, with the greys of Vandevelde. And the sea in the Great Yarmouth should have been noticed for its expression of water in violent agitation, seen in enormous extent from a great elevation. There is almost every form of sea in it—rolling waves dashing on the pier—successive breakers rolling to the shore—a vast horizon of multitudinous waves—and winding canals of calm water along the sands, bringing fragments of bright sky down into their yellow waste. There is hardly one of the views of the Southern Coast which does not give some new condition or circumstance of sea.

they send off another branch or bough. This law is imperative and without exception; no bough, nor stem, nor twig, ever tapering or becoming narrower towards its extremity by a hair's-breadth, save where it parts with some portion of its substance at a fork or bud, so that if all the twigs and sprays at the top and sides of the tree, which are, and *have been*, could be united without loss of space, they would form a round log of the diameter of the trunk from which they spring.

But as the trunks of most trees send off twigs and sprays of light under foliage, of which every individual fibre takes precisely its own thickness of wood from the parent stem, and as many of these drop off, leaving nothing but a small excrescence to record their existence, there is frequently a slight and delicate appearance of tapering bestowed on the trunk itself; while the same operation takes place much more extensively in the branches, it being natural to almost all trees to send out from their young limbs more wood than they can support; which, as the stem increases, gets contracted at the point of insertion, so as to check the flow of the sap, and then dies and drops off, leaving all along the bough, first on one side, then on another, a series of small excrescences sufficient to account for a degree of tapering, which is yet so very slight, that if we select a portion of a branch with no real fork or living bough to divide it or diminish it, the tapering is scarcely to be detected by the eye; and if we select a portion without such evidences of past ramification, there will be found none whatsoever.

But nature takes great care and pains to conceal this uniformity in her boughs. They are perpetually parting with little sprays here and there, which steal away their substance cautiously, and where the eye does not perceive the theft, until, a little way above, it feels the loss; and in the upper parts of the tree, the ramifications take place so constantly and delicately, that the effect upon the eye is precisely the same as if the boughs actually tapered, except here and there, where some avaricious one, greedy of substance, runs on for two or three yards without parting with anything, and becomes ungraceful in so doing.

Hence we see that although boughs may, and must be represented as actually tapering, they must only be so when they are sending off foliage and sprays, and when they are at such a distance that the particular forks and divisions cannot be evident to the eye; and farther, even in such circumstances, the tapering never can be sudden or rapid. No bough ever, with appearance of smooth tapering, loses more than one-tenth of its diameter in a length of ten diameters. Any greater diminution than this must be accounted for by visible ramifications, and must take place by steps, at each fork.

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But there are farther conclusions to be drawn from this great principle in trees. As they only diminish where they divide, their increase of number is in precise proportion to their diminution of size; so that whenever we come to the extremities of boughs, we must have a multitude of sprays sufficient to make up, if they were united, the bulk of that from which they spring. Where a bough divides into two equal ramifications, the diameter of each of the two is about two-thirds that of the single one, and the sum of their diameters, therefore, one-fourth greater than the diameter of the single one. Hence, if no boughs died or were lost, the quantity of wood in the sprays would appear one-fourth greater than would be necessary to make up the thickness of the trunk. But the lost boughs remove the excess, and therefore, speaking broadly, the diameters of the outer boughs put together would generally just make up the diameter of the trunk. Precision in representing this is neither desirable nor possible. All that is required is just so much observance of the general principle as may make the eye feel satisfied that there is something like the same quantity of wood in the sprays which there is in the stem. But to do this there must be, what there always is in nature, an exceeding complexity of the outer sprays. This complexity gradually increases towards their extremities, of course exactly in proportion to the slenderness of the twigs. The slenderer they become, the more there are of them, until at last, at the extremities of the tree, they form a mass of intricacy, which in winter, when it

can be seen, is scarcely distinguishable from fine herbage, and is beyond all power of definite representation; it can only be expressed by a mass of involved strokes. Also, as they shoot out in every direction, some are nearer, some more distant; some distinct, some faint; and their intersections and relations of distance are marked with the most exquisite gradations of aerial perspective.

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One of the most remarkable characters of natural leafage is the constancy with which, while the leaves are arranged on the spray with exquisite regularity, that regularity is modified in their actual effect. For as in every group of leaves some are seen sideways, forming merely long lines, some foreshortened, some crossing each other, every one differently turned and placed from all the others, the forms of the leaves, though in themselves similar, give rise to a thousand strange and differing forms in the group; and the shadows of some, passing over the others, still farther disguise and confuse the mass, until the eye can distinguish nothing but a graceful and flexible disorder of innumerable forms, with here and there a perfect leaf on the extremity, or a symmetrical association of one or two, just enough to mark the specific character and to give unity and grace, but never enough to repeat in one group what was done in another—never enough to prevent the eye from feeling that, however regular and mathematical may be the structure of parts, what is composed out of them is as various and infinite as any other part of nature. Nor does this take place in general effect only. Break off an elm bough, three feet long, in full leaf, and lay it on the table before you, and try to draw it, leaf for leaf. It is ten to one if in the whole bough (provided you do not twist it about as you work) you find one form of a leaf exactly like another; perhaps you will not even have *one* complete. Every leaf will be oblique, or foreshortened, or curled, or crossed by another, or shaded by another, or have something or other the matter with it; and though the whole bough will look graceful and symmetrical, you will scarcely be able to tell how or why it does so, since there is not one line of it like another.

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But if nature is so various when you have a bough on the table before you, what must she be when she retires from you, and gives you her whole mass and multitude? The leaves then at the extremities become as fine as dust, a mere confusion of points and lines between you and the sky, a confusion which you might as well hope to draw sea-sand particle by particle, as to imitate leaf for leaf. This, as it comes down into the body of the tree, gets closer, but never opaque; it is always transparent, with crumbling lights in it letting you through to the sky; then, out of this, come, heavier and heavier, the masses of illumined foliage, all dazzling and inextricable, save here and there a single leaf on the extremities; then, under these, you get deep passages of broken, irregular gloom, passing into transparent, green-lighted, misty hollows; the twisted stems glancing through them in their pale and entangled infinity, and the shafted sunbeams, rained from above, running along the lustrous leaves for an instant; then lost, then caught again on some emerald bank or knotted root, to be sent up again with a faint reflex on the white under sides of dim groups of drooping foliage, the shadows of the upper boughs running in grey network down the glossy stems, and resting in quiet chequers upon the glittering earth; but all penetrable and transparent, and, in proportion, inextricable and incomprehensible, except where across the labyrinth and the mystery of the dazzling light and dream-like shadow, falls, close to us, some solitary spray, some wreath of two or three motionless large leaves, the type and embodying of all that in the rest we feel and imagine, but can never see.

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But nature observes another principle in her foliage more important even than its intricacy. She always secures an exceeding harmony and repose. She is *so* intricate that her minuteness of parts becomes to the eye, at a little distance, one united veil or cloud of leaves, to destroy the evenness of which is perhaps a greater fault than to destroy its transparency. And it is by this kind of vaporescence, so to speak —by this flat, misty unison of parts—that nature, and her

faithful followers, are enabled to keep the eye in perfect repose in the midst of profusion, and to display beauty of form, wherever they choose, to the greatest possible advantage, by throwing it across some quiet, visionary passage of dimness and rest.

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17. The Modern Master.

We wish to remove the appearance of invidiousness and partiality which the constant prominence given in the present portion of the work to the productions of one artist, can scarcely fail of bearing in the minds of most readers. When we pass to the examination of what is beautiful and expressive in art, we shall frequently find distinctive qualities in the minds even of inferior artists, which have led them to the pursuit and embodying of particular trains of thought, altogether different from those which direct the compositions of other men, and incapable of comparison with them. Now, when this is the case, we should consider it in the highest degree both invidious and illogical, to say of such different modes of exertion of the intellect, that one is in all points greater or nobler than another. We shall probably find something in the working of all minds which has an end and a power peculiar to itself, and which is deserving of free and full admiration, without any reference whatsoever to what has, in other fields, been accomplished by other modes of thought, and directions of aim. We shall, indeed, find a wider range and grasp in one man than in another; but yet it will be our own fault if we do not discover something in the most limited range of mind which is different from, and in its way better than, anything presented to us by the more grasping intellect. We all know that the nightingale sings more nobly than the lark; but who, therefore, would wish the lark not to sing, or would deny that it had a character of its own, which bore a part among the melodies of creation no less essential than that of the more richly-gifted bird?

And thus we shall find and feel that whatever difference may exist between the intellectual powers of one artist and

another, yet wherever there is any true genius, there will be some peculiar lesson which even the humblest will teach us more sweetly and perfectly than those far above them in prouder attributes of mind; and we should be as mistaken as we should be unjust and invidious, if we refused to receive this their peculiar message with gratitude and veneration, merely because it was a sentence and not a volume.

But the case is different when we examine their relative fidelity to given facts. That fidelity depends on no peculiar modes of thought or habits of character; it is the result of keen sensibility, combined with high powers of memory and association. These qualities, as such, are the same in all men; character or feeling may direct their choice to this or that object, but the fidelity with which they treat either the one or the other, is dependent on those simple powers of sense and intellect which are like and comparable in all, and of which we can always say that they are greater in this man, or less in that, without reference to the character of the individual. Those feelings which direct Cox to the painting of wild, weedy banks, and cool, melting skies, and those which directed Barret to the painting of glowing foliage and melancholy twilight, are both just and beautiful in their way, and are both worthy of high praise and gratitude, without necessity, nay, without *proper* possibility of comparing one with the other. But the degree of fidelity with which the leaves of the one and the light of the other are rendered, depends upon faculties of sight, sense, and memory common to both, and perfectly comparable; and we may say fearlessly, and without injustice, that one or the other, as the case may be, is more faithful in that which they have chosen to represent.

It is also to be remembered that these faculties of sense and memory are not partial in their effect; they will not induce fidelity in the rendering of one class of object, and fail of doing so in another. They act equally, and with equal results, whatever may be the matter subjected to them; the same delicate sense which perceives the utmost grace of the fibres of a tree, will be equally unerring in tracing the character of cloud; and the quick memory which seizes and

retains the circumstances of a flying effect of shadow or colour, will be equally effectual in fixing the impression of the instantaneous form of a moving figure or a breaking wave. There are indeed one or two broad distinctions in the nature of the senses—a sensibility to colour, for instance, being very different from a sensibility to form; so that a man may possess one without the other, and an artist may succeed in mere imitation of what is before him, of air, sunlight, etc., without possessing sensibility at all. But wherever we have, in the drawing of any one object, sufficient evidence of real intellectual power, of the sense which perceives the essential qualities of a thing, and the judgment which arranges them so as to illustrate each other, we may be quite certain that the same sense and judgment will operate equally on whatever is subjected to them, and that the artist will be equally great and masterly in his drawing of all that he attempts.

Hence we may be quite sure that wherever an artist appears to be truthful in one branch of art, and not in another, the apparent truth is either owing to some trickery of imitation, or is not so great as we suppose it to be. In nine cases out of ten, people who are celebrated for drawing only one thing, and *can* only draw one thing, draw that one thing worse than anybody else. An artist may indeed confine himself to a limited range of subject, but if he be really true in his rendering of this, his power of doing more will be perpetually showing itself in accessories and minor points. There are few men, for instance, more limited in subject than Hunt, and yet I do not think there is another man in the old Water-Colour Society, with so keen an eye for truth, or with power so universal. And this is the reason for the exceeding prominence which in the foregoing investigation one or two artists have always assumed over the rest; for the habits of accurate observation and delicate powers of hand which they possess, have equal effect, and maintain the same superiority in their works, to whatever class of subject they may be directed. And thus we have been compelled, however unwillingly, to pass hastily by the works of many gifted men, because, however pure their feeling, or original their conceptions, they were wanting in those faculties of the hand

and mind which ensure perfect fidelity to nature: it will be only hereafter, when we are at liberty to take full cognizance of the thought, however feebly it may be clothed in language, that we shall be able to do real justice to the disciples either of modern or of ancient art.

But as far as we have gone at present, and with respect only to the *material* truth, which is all that we have been able to investigate, the conclusion to which we must be led is as clear as it is inevitable: that modern artists, as a body, are far more just and full in their views of material things than any landscape painters whose works are extant—but that J. M. W. Turner is the only man who has ever given an entire transcript of the whole system of nature, and is, in this point of view, the only perfect landscape painter whom the world has ever seen.

VOLUME II.

18. The Theoretic or Æsthetic Faculty.

I PROCEED to examine the nature of what I have called the Theoretic faculty, and to justify my substitution of the term "Theoretic" for "Æsthetic," which is the one commonly employed with reference to it.

Now the term "æsthesis" properly signifies mere sensual perception of the outward qualities and necessary effects of bodies; in which sense only, if we would arrive at any accurate conclusions on this difficult subject, it should always be used. But I wholly deny that the impressions of beauty are in any way sensual; they are neither sensual nor intellectual, but moral: and for the faculty receiving them, whose difference from mere perception I shall immediately endeavour to explain, no term can be more accurate or convenient than that employed by the Greeks, "Theoretic," which I pray permission, therefore, always to use, and to call the operation of the faculty itself, Theoria.

Let us begin at the lowest point, and observe, first, what differences of dignity may exist between different kinds of æsthetic or sensual pleasure, properly so called.

Now it is evident that the being common to brutes, or peculiar to man, can alone be no rational test of inferiority or dignity in pleasures. We must not assume that man is the nobler animal, and then deduce the nobleness of his delights; but we must prove the nobleness of the delights, and thence the nobleness of the animal. The dignity of affection is no way lessened, because a large measure of it may be found in lower animals; neither is the vileness of gluttony and lust abated, because they are common to men.

It is clear, therefore, that there is a standard of dignity in the pleasures and passions themselves, by which we also class the creatures capable of, or suffering them.

The first great distinction, we observe, is that noted by Aristotle, that men are called temperate and intemperate with regard to some, and not so with respect to others; and that those with respect to which they are so called are, by common consent, held to be the vilest. But Aristotle, though exquisitely subtle in his notation of facts, does not frequently give us satisfactory account of, or reason for them. Content with stating the fact of these pleasures being held the lowest, he shows not why this estimation of them is just, and confuses the reader by observing casually respecting the higher pleasures, what is indeed true, but appears at first opposed to his own position, namely, that "in these also men may be conceived as taking pleasure either rightly, or more or less than is right."[1] Which being so, and evident capability of excess or defect existing in pleasures of this higher order, let us consider how it happens that men are not called intemperate when they indulge in excess of this kind; and what is that difference in nature of the pleasure, which diminishes the criminality of its excess.

Men are held intemperate, only when their desires overcome or prevent the action of their reason; and they are indeed intemperate in the exact degree in which such prevention or interference takes place, and therefore in many instances and acts which do not lower the world's estimation of their temperance. For so long as it can be supposed that the reason has acted imperfectly owing to its own imperfection, or to the imperfection of the premises submitted to it, as when men give an inordinate preference to their own pursuits, because they cannot, in the nature of things, have sufficiently experienced the goodness and benefit of others; and so long as it may be presumed that men have referred to reason in what they do, and have not suffered its orders to be disobeyed through mere impulse and desire, though those orders may be full of error owing to the reason's own feebleness; so long men are not held intem-

[1] ὡς δεῖ, καὶ καθ' ὑπερβολὴν καὶ ἔλλειψιν.

perate. But when it is palpably evident that the reason cannot have erred, but that its voice has been deadened or disobeyed, and that the reasonable creature has been dragged dead round the walls of his own citadel by mere passion, then, and then only, men are of all held intemperate. And this is evidently the case with respect to inordinate indulgence in pleasures of touch and taste; for these, being destructive in their continuance not only of all other pleasures, but of the very sensibilities by which they themselves are received, and this penalty being actually known and experienced by those indulging in them, so that the reason cannot but pronounce right respecting their perilousness, there is no palliation of the wrong choice; and the man, as utterly incapable of Will,[1] is called intemperate, or ἀκόλαστος.

It would be well if the reader would for himself follow out this subject, which it would be irrelevant here to pursue farther, observing, how a certain degree of intemperance is suspected and attributed to men with respect to higher impulses; as, for instance, in the case of anger, or any other passion criminally indulged; and yet is not so attributed as in the case of sensual pleasures: because in anger the reason is supposed not to have had time to operate, and to be itself affected by the presence of the passion, which seizes the man involuntarily and before he is aware; whereas, in the case of the sensual pleasures, the act is deliberate, and determined on beforehand, in direct defiance of reason. Nevertheless, if no precaution be taken against immoderate anger, and the passions gain upon the man, so as to be evidently wilful and unrestrained, and admitted contrary to all reason, we begin to look upon him as, in the real sense of the word, intemperate; and, in consequence, assign to him his place, for the time, among the beasts, as definitely as if he had yielded to the pleasurable temptations of touch or taste.

We see, then, that the primal ground of inferiority in these pleasures is that which *proves* their indulgence to be contrary to reason; namely, their destructiveness upon prolongation, and their incapability of coexisting continually with other delights or perfections of the system.

[1] Comp. Hooker, *Eccl. Pol.*, book i., chap. viii.

And this incapability of continuance directs us to the second cause of their inferiority; namely, that they are given to us as subservient to life, as instruments of our preservation, compelling us to seek the things necessary to our being, and that, therefore, when this their function is fully performed, they ought to have an end; and can be only artificially, and under high penalty, prolonged. But the pleasures of sight and hearing are given as gifts. They answer not any purposes of mere existence; for the distinction of all that is useful or dangerous to us might be made, and often is made, by the eye, without its receiving the slightest pleasure of sight. We might have learned to distinguish fruits and grain from flowers, without having any superior pleasure in the aspect of the latter; and the ear might have learned to distinguish the sounds that communicate ideas, or to recognize intimations of elemental danger, without perceiving either melody in the voice, or majesty in the thunder. And as these pleasures have no function to perform, so there is no limit to their continuance in the accomplishment of their end, for they are an end in themselves, and so may be perpetual with all of us; being in no way destructive, but rather increasing in exquisiteness by repetition.

Herein, then, we find very sufficient ground for the higher estimation of these delights; first, in their being eternal and inexhaustible, and secondly, in their being evidently no means or instrument of life, but an object of life. Now in whatever is an object of life, in whatever may be infinitely and for itself desired, we may be sure there is something of divine; for God will not make any thing an object of life to His creatures which does not point to, or partake of, Himself. And so, though we were to regard the pleasures of sight merely as the highest of sensual pleasures, and though they were of rare occurrence, and, when occurring, isolated and imperfect, there would still be a supernatural character about them, owing to their self-sufficiency. But when, instead of being scattered, interrupted, or chance-distributed, they are gathered together, and so arranged to enhance each other as by chance they could not be, there is caused by them not only a feeling of strong affection

towards the object in which they exist, but a perception of purpose and adaptation of it to our desires; a perception, therefore, of the immediate operation of the Intelligence which so formed us, and so feeds us.

Out of which perception arise Joy, Admiration, and Gratitude.

Now the mere animal consciousness of the pleasantness I call Æsthesis; but the exulting, reverent, and grateful perception of it I call Theoria. For this, and this only, is the full comprehension and contemplation of the Beautiful as a gift of God; a gift not necessary to our being, but added to, and elevating it, and twofold; first of the desire, and secondly of the thing desired.

And that this joyfulness and reverence are a necessary part of Theoretic pleasure is very evident, when we consider that, by the presence of these feelings, even the lower and more sensual pleasures may be rendered Theoretic. Thus Aristotle has subtly noted that "we call not men intemperate so much with respect to the scents of roses or herb-perfumes as of ointments and of condiments," though the reason that he gives for this be futile enough. For the fact is, that of scents artificially prepared the extreme desire is intemperance; but of natural and God-given scents, which take their part in the harmony and pleasantness of creation, there can hardly be intemperance: not that there is any absolute difference between the two kinds, but that these are likely to be received with gratitude and joyfulness rather than those; so that we despise the seeking of essences and unguents, but not the sowing of violets along our garden banks. But all things may be elevated by affection, as the spikenard of Mary, and in the Song of Solomon the myrrh upon the handles of the lock, and the sense of Isaac of the field-fragrance upon his son. And the general law for all these pleasures is, that, when sought in the abstract and ardently, they are foul things; but when received with thankfulness and with reference to God's glory, they become Theoretic: and so we may find something divine in the sweetness of wild fruits, as well as in the pleasantness of the pure air, and the tenderness of its natural perfumes that come and go as they list.

It will now be understood why it was formerly said in the chapter respecting ideas of beauty, that those ideas were the subject of moral, and not of intellectual, nor altogether of sensual perception; and why I spoke of the pleasures connected with them as derived from "those material sources which are agreeable to our moral nature in its purity and perfection." For, as it is necessary to the existence of an idea of beauty, that the sensual pleasure which may be its basis should be accompanied first with joy, then with love of the object, then with the perception of kindness in a superior intelligence, finally, with thankfulness and veneration towards that intelligence itself; and as no idea can be at all considered as in any way an idea of beauty, until it be made up of these emotions, any more than we can be said to have an idea of a letter of which we perceive the perfume and the fair writing, without understanding the contents of it, or intent of it; and as these emotions are in no way resultant from, nor obtainable by, any operation of the Intellect; it is evident that the sensation of beauty is not sensual on the one hand, nor is it intellectual on the other, but is dependent on a pure, right, and open state of the heart, both for its truth and for its intensity, insomuch that even the right after-action of the Intellect upon facts of beauty so apprehended, is dependent on the acuteness of the heart-feeling about them. And thus the Apostolic words come true, in this minor respect as in all others, that men are alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, having the Understanding darkened because of the hardness of their hearts, and so, being past feeling, give themselves up to lasciviousness. For we do indeed see constantly that men having naturally acute perceptions of the beautiful, yet not receiving it with a pure heart, nor into their hearts at all, never comprehend it, nor receive good from it, but make it a mere minister to their desires, and accompaniment and seasoning of lower sensual pleasures, until all their emotions take the same earthly stamp, and the sense of beauty sinks into the servant of lust.

Nor is what the world commonly understands by the

cultivation of taste, anything more or better than this; at least in times of corrupt and over-pampered civilization, when men build palaces and plant groves and gather luxuries, that they and their devices may hang in the corners of the world like fine-spun cobwebs, with greedy, puffed-up, spider-like lusts in the middle. And this, which in Christian times is the abuse and corruption of the sense of beauty, was in that Pagan life of which St. Paul speaks, little less than the essence of it, and the best they had. I do not know that of the expressions of affection towards external nature to be found among Heathen writers, there are any of which the leading thought leans not towards the sensual parts of her. Her beneficence they sought, and her power they shunned; her teaching through both they understood never. The pleasant influences of soft winds, and ringing streamlets, and shady coverts, of the violet couch and plane-tree shade, they received, perhaps, in a more noble way than we; but they found not anything, except fear, upon the bare mountain, or in the ghostly glen.

The Hybla heather they loved more for its sweet hives than its purple hues. But the Christian Theoria seeks not, though it accepts and touches with its own purity, what the Epicurean sought; but finds its food and the objects of its love everywhere, in what is harsh and fearful as well as in what is kind: nay, even in all that seems coarse and commonplace, seizing that which is good; and sometimes delighting more at finding its table spread in strange places, and in the presence of its enemies, and its honey coming out of the rock, than if all were harmonized into a less wondrous pleasure; hating only what is self-sighted and insolent of men's work, despising all that is not of God, unless reminding it of God, yet able to find evidence of Him still where all seems forgetful of Him, and to turn that into a witness of His working which was meant to obscure it; and so with clear and unoffended sight beholding Him for ever, according to the written promise, "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God."

19. True and False Taste.

THE temper by which right taste is formed, is characteristically patient. It dwells upon what is submitted to it. It does not trample upon it, lest it should be pearls, even though it look like husks. It is a good ground, soft, penetrable, retentive; it does not send up thorns of unkind thoughts, to choke the weak seed; it is hungry and thirsty too, and drinks all the dew that falls on it. It is an honest and good heart, that shows no too ready springing before the sun be up, but fails not afterwards; it is distrustful of itself, so as to be ready to believe and to try all things, and yet so trustful of itself, that it will neither quit what it has tried, nor take anything without trying. And the pleasure which it has in things that it finds true and good is so great, that it cannot possibly be led aside by any tricks of fashion, or diseases of vanity; it cannot be cramped in its conclusions by partialities and hypocrisies; its visions and its delights are too penetrating, too living, for any white-washed object or shallow fountain long to endure or supply. It clasps all that it loves so hard, that it crushes it if it be hollow.

Now, the conclusions of this disposition are sure to be eventually right; more and more right according to the general maturity of all the powers, but it is sure to come right at last, because its operation is in analogy to, and in harmony with, the whole spirit of the Christian moral system, and must ultimately love and rest in the great sources of happiness common to all the human race, and based on the relations they hold to their Creator.

These common and general sources of pleasure consist, I believe, in a certain seal, or impress of divine work and character, upon whatever God has wrought in all the world; only, it being necessary for the perception of them, that their contraries should also be set before us, these divine characteristics, though inseparable from all divine works, are yet suffered to exist in such varieties of degree, that their most limited manifestation shall, in opposition to their most abundant, act as a foil or contrary; just as we conceive of

cold as contrary to heat, though the most extreme cold we can produce or conceive is not inconsistent with an unknown amount of heat in the body.

Our purity of taste, therefore, is best tested by its universality; for if we can only admire this thing or that, we may be sure that our cause for liking is of a finite and false nature. But if we can perceive beauty in everything of God's doing, we may argue that we have reached the true perception of its universal laws. Hence, false taste may be known by its fastidiousness, by its demands of pomp, splendour, and unusual combination, by its enjoyment only of particular styles and modes of things, and by its pride also: for it is for ever meddling, mending, accumulating, and self-exulting; its eye is always upon itself, and it tests all things round it by the way they fit it. But true taste is for ever growing, learning, reading, worshipping, laying its hand upon its mouth because it is astonished, lamenting over itself, and testing itself by the way that it fits things. And it finds whereof to feed, and whereby to grow, in all things. The complaint so often heard from young artists, that they have not within their reach materials or subjects enough for their fancy, is utterly groundless, and the sign only of their own blindness and inefficiency; for there is that to be seen in every street and lane of every city, that to be felt and found in every human heart and countenance, that to be loved in every roadside weed and moss-grown wall, which, in the hands of faithful men, may convey emotions of glory and sublimity continual and exalted.

Let therefore the young artist beware of the spirit of Choice;[1] it is an insolent spirit at the best, and commonly a base and blind one too, checking all progress and blasting all power, encouraging weaknesses, pampering partialities, and teaching us to look to accidents of nature for the help and the joy which should come from our own hearts. He draws nothing well who thirsts not to draw *every*thing; when a good painter shrinks, it is because he is humbled, not fastidious; when he stops, it is because he is surfeited, and

[1] Nothing comes amiss,
A good digestion turneth all to health. G. HERBERT.

not because he thinks Nature has given him unkindly food, or that he fears famine.[1]

Hence, it becomes a more imperative duty to accustom ourselves to the enjoyment of those pleasures of sight which are most elevated in character, because these are not only the most acute, but the most easily, constantly, and unselfishly attainable. For had it been ordained by the Almighty that the highest pleasures of sight should be those of most difficult attainment, and that to arrive at them it should be necessary to accumulate gilded palaces, tower over tower, and pile artificial mountains around insinuated lakes, there would have been a direct contradiction between the unselfish duties and inherent desires of every individual. But no such contradiction exists in the system of Divine Providence; which, leaving it open to us, if we will, as creatures in probation, to abuse this sense like every other, and pamper it with selfish and thoughtless vanities as we pamper the palate with deadly meats, until the appetite of tasteful cruelty is lost in its sickened satiety, incapable of pleasure, unless, Caligula like, it concentrate the labour of a million of lives into the sensation of an hour, leaves it also open to us, by humble and loving ways, to make ourselves susceptible of deep delight from the meanest objects of creation; and of a delight which shall not separate us from our fellows, nor require the sacrifice of any duty or occupation, but which shall bind us closer to men and to God, and be with us always, harmonized with every action, consistent with every claim, unchanging and eternal.

20. The Child Instinct Respecting Space.

I SUPPOSE there are few among those who love nature otherwise than by profession and at second-hand, who look not back to their youngest and least-learned days as those of the most intense, superstitious, insatiable, and beatific per-

[1] Yet note the difference between the choice that comes of Pride, and the choice that comes of LOVE.

ception of her splendours. And the bitter decline of this glorious feeling, though many note it not, partly owing to the cares and weight of manhood, which leave them not the time nor the liberty to look for their lost treasure, and partly to the human and divine affections which are appointed to take its place, yet has formed the subject, not indeed of lamentation, but of holy thankfulness for the witness it bears to the immortal origin and end of our nature, to one whose authority is almost without appeal in all questions relating to the influence of external things upon the pure human soul.

> Heaven lies about us in our infancy.
> Shades of the prison-house begin to close
> Upon the growing boy:
> But he beholds the light, and whence it flows,
> He sees it in his joy.
> The youth, who daily farther from the east
> Must travel, still is nature's priest,
> And by the vision splendid
> Is on his way attended.
> At length the man perceives it die away
> And fade into the light of common day.

And if it were possible for us to recollect all the unaccountable and happy instincts of the careless time, and to reason upon them with the maturer judgment, we might arrive at more rapid and right results than either the philosophy or the sophisticated practice of art has yet attained. But we lose the perceptions before we are capable of methodizing or comparing them.

One, however, of these child instincts, I believe that few forget, the emotion, namely, caused by all open ground, or lines of any spacious kind against the sky, behind which there might be conceived the Sea. It is an emotion more pure than that caused by the sea itself, for I recollect distinctly running down behind the banks of a high beach to get their land line cutting against the sky, and receiving a more strange delight from this than from the sight of the ocean. I am not sure that this feeling is common to all children (or would be common, if they were all in circumstances admitting it), but I have ascertained it to

be frequent among those who possess the most vivid sensibilities for nature; and I am certain that the modification of it which belongs to our after years is common to all, the love, namely, of a light distance appearing over a comparatively dark horizon. This I have tested too frequently to be mistaken by offering to indifferent spectators forms of equal abstract beauty in half tint, relieved, the one against dark sky, the other against a bright distance. The preference is invariably given to the latter; and it is very certain that this preference arises not from any supposition of there being greater truth in this than the other, for the same preference is unhesitatingly accorded to the same effect in nature herself.

Whatever beauty there may result from effects of light on foreground objects, from the dew of the grass, the flash of the cascade, the glitter of the birch trunk, or the fair daylight hues of darker things (and joyfulness there is in all of them), there is yet a light which the eye invariably seeks with a deeper feeling of the beautiful, the light of the declining or breaking day, and the flakes of scarlet cloud burning like watch fires in the green sky of the horizon; a deeper feeling, I say, not perhaps more acute, but having more of spiritual hope and longing, less of animal and present life, more manifest, invariably, in those of more serious and determined mind (I use the word serious, not as being opposed to cheerful, but to trivial and volatile), but, I think, marked and unfailing even in those of the least thoughtful dispositions. I am willing to let it rest on the determination of every reader, whether the pleasure which he has received from these effects of calm and luminous distance be not the most singular and memorable of which he has been conscious; whether all that is dazzling in colour, perfect in form, gladdening in expression, be not of evanescent and shallow appealing, when compared with the still small voice of the level twilight behind purple hills, or the scarlet arch of dawn over the dark troublous-edged sea.

21. The Curves of Beauty.

That all forms of acknowledged beauty are composed exclusively of curves will, I believe, be at once allowed; but that which there will be need more especially to prove is, the subtlety and constancy of curvature in all natural forms whatsoever. I believe that, except in crystals, in certain mountain forms admitted for the sake of sublimity or contrast (as in the slope of debris), in rays of light, in the levels of calm water and alluvial land, and in some few organic developments, there are no lines nor surfaces of nature without curvature; though as we before saw in clouds, more especially in their under lines towards the horizon, and in vast and extended plains, right lines are often suggested which are not actual. Without these we could not be sensible of the value of the contrasting curves; and while, therefore, for the most part the eye is fed in natural forms with a grace of curvature which no hand nor instrument can follow, other means are provided to give beauty to those surfaces which are admitted for contrast, as in water by its reflection of the gradations which it possesses not itself. In freshly broken ground which Nature has not yet had time to model, in quarries and pits which are none of her cutting, in those convulsions and evidences of convulsion of whose influence on ideal landscape I shall presently have occasion to speak, and generally in all ruin and disease, and interference of one order of being with another (as in the browsing line of park trees), the curves vanish, and violently opposed or broken and unmeaning lines take their place.

What curvature is to lines, gradation is to shades and colours. It is their infinity, and divides them into an infinite number of degrees. Absolutely without gradation no natural surface can possibly be, except under circumstances of so rare conjunction as to amount to a *lusus naturæ:* for we have seen that few surfaces are without curvature, and every curved surface must be gradated by the nature of light; and for the gradation of the few plane

surfaces that exist, means are provided in local colour, aërial perspective, reflected lights, etc., from which it is but barely conceivable that they should ever escape. For instances of the complete absence of gradation we must look to man's work, or to his disease or decrepitude. Compare the gradated colours of the rainbow with the stripes of a target, and the gradual deepening of the youthful blood in the cheek with an abrupt patch of rouge, or with the sharply drawn veins of old age.

22. Unrest and Repose.

Both in subjects of the intellect and the senses, it is to be remembered that the love of change is a weakness and imperfection of our nature, and implies in it the state of probation; and that it is to teach us that things about us here are not meant for our continual possession or satisfaction, that ever such passion of change was put in us as that "custom lies upon us with a weight, heavy as frost, and deep almost as life;" and only such weak thews and baby grasp given to our intellect as that "the best things we do are painful, and the exercise of them grievous, being continued without intermission, so as in those very actions whereby we are especially perfected in this life we are not able to persist."

And so it will be found that they are the weakest-minded and the hardest-hearted men that most love variety and change: for the weakest-minded are those who both wonder most at things new, and digest worst things old; in so far that everything they have lies rusty, and loses lustre for want of use, neither do they make any stir among their possessions, nor look over them to see what may be made of them, nor keep any great store, nor are householders with storehouses of things new and old; but they catch at the new-fashioned garments, and let the moth and thief look after the rest: and the hardest-hearted men are those that least feel the endearing and binding power of custom, and hold on by no cords of affection to any shore, but drive with the waves that cast up mire and dirt. And certainly it is not to be held that the

perception of beauty, and desire of it, are greatest in the hardest heart and weakest brain; but the love of variety is so, and therefore variety can be no cause of the beautiful, except, as I have said, when it is necessary for the perception of unity. Neither is there any better test of beauty than its surviving or annihilating the love of change; a test which the best judges of art have need frequently to use; for there is much that surprises by its brilliancy, or attracts by its singularity, that can hardly but by course of time, though assuredly it will by course of time, be winnowed away from the right and real beauty whose retentive power is for ever on the increase, a bread of the soul for which the hunger is continual.

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As opposed to passion, change, fulness, or laborious exertion, Repose is the especial and separating characteristic of the eternal mind and power. It is the "I am" of the Creator opposed to the "I become" of all creatures; it is the sign alike of the supreme knowledge which is incapable of surprise, the supreme power which is incapable of labour, the supreme volition which is incapable of change; it is the stillness of the beams of the eternal chambers laid upon the variable waters of ministering creatures. And as we saw before that the infinity which was a type of the divine nature on the one hand, became yet more desirable on the other from its peculiar address to our prison hopes, and to the expectations of an unsatisfied and unaccomplished existence; so the types of this third attribute of the Deity might seem to have been rendered farther attractive to mortal instinct, through the infliction upon the fallen creature of a curse necessitating a labour once unnatural and still most painful; so that the desire of rest planted in the heart is no sensual nor unworthy one, but a longing for renovation and for escape from a state whose every phase is mere preparation for another equally transitory, to one in which permanence shall have become possible through perfection. Hence the great call of Christ to men, that call on which St. Augustine fixed as the essential expression of Christian hope, is accompanied by the promise of rest;[1] and the death bequest of Christ to men is peace.

[1] *Matt.* xi. 28.

Repose, as it is expressed in material things, is either a simple appearance of permanence and quietness, as in the massy forms of a mountain or rock, accompanied by the lulling effect of all mighty sight and sound, which all feel and none define (it would be less sacred if more explicable),

εὕδουσιν δ' ὀρέων κορυφαί τε καὶ φάραγγες.

or else it is repose proper, the rest of things in which there is vitality or capability of motion actual or imagined; and with respect to these the expression of repose is greater in proportion to the amount and sublimity of the action which is *not* taking place, as well as to the intensity of the negation of it. Thus we do not speak of repose in a pebble, because the motion of a pebble has nothing in it of energy or vitality, neither its repose of stability. But having once seen a great rock come down a mountain side, we have a noble sensation of its rest, now bedded immovably among the fern; because the power and fearfulness of its motion were great, and its stability and negation of motion are now great in proportion. Hence the imagination, which delights in nothing more than in the enhancing of the characters of repose, effects this usually by either attributing to things visibly energetic an ideal stability, or to things visibly stable an ideal activity or vitality. Thus Wordsworth speaks of the Cloud, which in itself has too much of changefulness for his purpose, as one

> That heareth not the loud winds when they call,
> And moveth altogether if it move at all.

And again the children, which, that it may remove from them the child-restlessness, the imagination conceives as rooted flowers,

> Beneath an old grey oak, as violets, lie.

On the other hand, the scattered rocks, which have not, as such, vitality enough for rest, are gifted with it by the living image: they

> Lie crouched around us like a flock of sheep.

Thus, as we saw that unity demanded for its expression what at first might have seemed its contrary, variety, so Repose demands for its expression the implied capability of

its opposite, Energy; and this even in its lower manifestations, in rocks and stones and trees. By comparing the modes in which the mind is disposed to regard the boughs of a fair and vigorous tree, motionless in the summer air, with the effect produced by one of the same boughs hewn square and used for threshold or lintel, the reader will at once perceive the connection of vitality with repose, and the part they both bear in beauty.

But that which in lifeless things ennobles them by seeming to indicate life, ennobles higher creatures by indicating the exaltation of their earthly vitality into a Divine vitality; and raising the life of sense into the life of faith: faith, whether we receive it in the sense of adherence to resolution, obedience to law, regardfulness of promise, in which from all time it has been the test, as the shield, of the true being and life of man; or in the still higher sense of trustfulness in the presence, kindness, and word of God, in which form it has been exhibited under the Christian dispensation. For, whether in one or other form—whether the faithfulness of men whose path is chosen and portion fixed, in the following and receiving of that path and portion, as in the Thermopylæ camp; or the happier faithfulness of children in the good giving of their Father, and of subjects in the conduct of their King, as in the "Stand still and see the salvation of God" of the Red Sea shore—there is rest and peacefulness, the "standing still," in both, the quietness of action determined, of spirit unalarmed, of expectation unimpatient: beautiful even when based only, as of old, on the self-command and self-possession, the persistent dignity or the uncalculating love, of the creature;[1] but more beautiful yet when the rest is one of humility instead of pride, and the trust no more in the resolution we have taken, but in the hand we hold.

[1] The universal instinct of repose,
The longing for confirmed tranquillity
Inward and outward, humble, yet sublime.
The life where hope and memory are as one.
Earth quiet and unchanged; the human soul
Consistent in self-rule; and heaven revealed
To meditation, in that quietness.
WORDSWORTH, *Excursion*, book iii.

23. Vital Beauty.

I HAVE already noticed the example of very pure and high typical beauty which is to be found in the lines and gradations of unsullied snow: if, passing to the edge of a sheet of it, upon the Lower Alps, early in May, we find, as we are nearly sure to find, two or three little round openings pierced in it, and through these emergent, a slender, pensive, fragile flower,[1] whose small, dark, purple-fringed bell hangs down and shudders over the icy cleft that it has cloven, as if partly wondering at its own recent grave, and partly dying of very fatigue after its hard-won victory; we shall be, or we ought to be, moved by a totally different impression of loveliness from that which we receive among the dead ice and the idle clouds. There is now uttered to us a call for sympathy, now offered to us an image of moral purpose and achievement, which, however unconscious or senseless the creature may indeed be that so seems to call, cannot be heard without affection, nor contemplated without worship, by any of us whose heart is rightly tuned, or whose mind is clearly and surely sighted.

Throughout the whole of the organic creation every being in a perfect state exhibits certain appearances or evidences of happiness; and is in its nature, its desires, its modes of nourishment, habitation, and death, illustrative or expressive of certain moral dispositions or principles. Now, first, in the keenness of the sympathy which we feel in the happiness, real or apparent, of all organic beings, and which, as we shall presently see, invariably prompts us, from the joy we have in it, to look upon those as most lovely which are most happy; and secondly, in the justness of the moral sense which rightly reads the lesson they are all intended to teach, and classes them in orders of worthiness and beauty according to the rank and nature of that lesson, whether it be of warning or example, in those that wallow or in those that soar; in our right accepting and reading of all this, consists, I say, the ultimately perfect condition of that noble Theoretic faculty, whose place in the system of our nature I have already partly vindicated

[1] Soldanella alpina.

with respect to typical, but which can only fully be established with respect to vital beauty.

Its first perfection, therefore, relating to Vital Beauty, is the kindness and unselfish fulness of heart, which receives the utmost amount of pleasure from the happiness of all things. Of which in high degree the heart of man is incapable; neither what intense enjoyment the angels may have in all that they see of things that move and live, and in the part they take in the shedding of God's kindness upon them, can we know or conceive: only in proportion as we draw near to God, and are made in measure like unto Him, can we increase this our possession of Charity, of which the entire essence is in God only. But even the ordinary exercise of this faculty implies a condition of the whole moral being in some measure right and healthy, and to the entire exercise of it there is necessary the entire perfection of the Christian character; for he who loves not God, nor his brother, cannot love the grass beneath his feet and the creatures which live not for his uses, filling those spaces in the universe which he needs not; while on the other hand, none can love God, nor his human brother, without loving all things which his Father loves; nor without looking upon them, every one, as in that respect his brethren also, and perhaps worthier than he, if, in the under concords they have to fill, their part is touched more truly. It is good to read of that kindness and humbleness of St. Francis of Assisi, who spoke never to bird nor to cicala, nor even to wolf and beast of prey, but as his brother; and so we find are moved the minds of all good and mighty men, as in the lesson that we have from the Mariner of Coleridge, and yet more truly and rightly taught in the "Hartleap Well,"

> Never to blend our pleasure, or our pride,
> With sorrow of the meanest thing that feels;

and again in the White Doe of Rylstone, with the added teaching, that anguish of our own—

> Is tempered and allayed by sympathies,
> Aloft ascending and descending deep,
> Even to the inferior kinds.

So that I know not of anything more destructive of the whole Theoretic faculty, not to say of the Christian character and human intellect, than those accursed sports in which man makes of himself, cat, tiger, serpent, chætodon, and alligator in one; and gathers into one continuance of cruelty, for his amusement, all the devices that brutes sparingly and at intervals use against each other for their necessities.

As we pass from these beings of whose happiness and pain we are certain, to those in which it is doubtful, or only seeming, as possibly in plants (though I would fain hold, if I might, "the faith, that every flower enjoys the air it breathes"), yet our feeling for them has in it more of sympathy than of actual love, as receiving from them in delight far more than we can give; for love, I think, chiefly grows in giving; at least its essence is the desire of doing good, or giving happiness. Still the sympathy of very sensitive minds usually reaches so far as to the conception of life in the plant, and so to love, as with Shakspeare always, as he has taught us in the sweet voices of Ophelia and Perdita, and Wordsworth always, as of the daffodils, and the celandine:

> It doth not love the shower, nor seek the cold.
> This neither is its courage, nor its choice,
> But its necessity in being old:

and so all other great poets;[1] nor do I believe that any mind, however rude, is without some slight perception or acknowledgment of joyfulness in breathless things, as most certainly there are none but feel instinctive delight in the appearances of such enjoyment.

For it is matter of easy demonstration, that setting the characters of typical beauty aside, the pleasure afforded by every organic form is in proportion to its appearance of healthy vital energy. In a rose-tree, setting aside all the considerations of gradated flushing of colour, and fair folding of line, which its flowers share with the cloud or the snow-wreath, we find, in and through all this, certain signs pleasant and acceptable as signs of life and strength in the plant.

[1] Compare Milton:

> They at her coming sprung,
> And, touched by her fair tendance, gladlier grew.

Every leaf and stalk is seen to have a function, to be constantly exercising that function, and as it *seems, solely* for the good and enjoyment of the plant. It is true that reflection will show us that the plant is not living for itself alone, that its life is one of benefaction, that it gives as well as receives; but no sense of this whatsoever mingles with our perception of physical beauty in its forms. Those forms appear to be necessary to its health; the symmetry of its leaflets, the smoothness of its stalks, the vivid green of its shoots, are looked upon by us as signs of the plant's own happiness and perfection; they are useless to us, except as they give us pleasure in our sympathizing with that of the plant; and if we see a leaf withered, or shrunk, or worm-eaten, we say it is ugly, and feel it to be painful, not because it hurts *us*, but because it seems to hurt the plant, and conveys to us an idea of pain and disease and failure of life in *it*.

That the amount of pleasure we receive is in exact proportion to the appearance of vigour and sensibility in the plant, is easily proved by observing the effect of those which show the evidences of it in the least degree, as, for instance, any of the cacti not in flower. Their masses are heavy and simple, their growth slow; their various parts, if they are ramified, jointed on one to another, as if they were buckled or pinned together instead of growing out of each other: and the fruit imposed upon the body of the plant, so that it looks like a swelling or disease. All these circumstances so concur to deprive the plant of vital evidences, that we receive from it more sense of pain than of beauty; and yet, even here, the sharpness or the angles, the symmetrical order and strength of the spines, the fresh and even colour of the body, are looked for earnestly as signs of healthy condition; our pain is increased by their absence, and indefinitely increased if blotches, and other appearances of decay, interfere with that little life which the plant seems to possess.

The same singular characters belong in animals to the Crustacea, as to the lobster, crab, scorpion, etc., and in great measure deprive them of the beauty which we find in higher orders; so that we are reduced to look for their beauty to single parts and joints, and not to the whole animal.

Now I wish particularly to impress upon the reader that all these sensations of beauty in the plant arise from our unselfish sympathy with its happiness, and not from any view of the qualities in it which may bring good to us, nor even from our acknowledgment in it of any moral condition beyond that of mere felicity; for such an acknowledgment belongs to the second operation of the Theoretic faculty, and not to the sympathetic part which we are at present examining; so that we even find that in this respect, the moment we begin to look upon any creature as subordinate to some purpose out of itself, some of the sense of organic beauty is lost. Thus, when we are told that the leaves of a plant are occupied in decomposing carbonic acid, and preparing oxygen for us, we begin to look upon it with some such indifference as upon a gasometer. It has become a machine; some of our sense of its happiness is gone; its emanation of inherent life is no longer pure. The bending trunk, waving to and fro in the wind above the waterfall, is beautiful because it is happy, though it is perfectly useless to us.[1] The same trunk, hewn down and thrown across the stream, has lost its beauty. It serves as a bridge—it has become useful; and its beauty is gone, or what it retains is purely typical, dependent on its lines and colours, not on its functions. Saw it into planks, and, though now adapted to become permanently useful, its beauty is lost for ever, or to be regained only when decay and ruin shall have withdrawn it again from use, and left it to receive from the hand of nature the velvet moss and varied lichen, which may again suggest ideas of inherent happiness, and tint its mouldering sides with hues of life.

There is something, I think, peculiarly beautiful and instructive in this unselfishness of the Theoretic faculty, and in its abhorrence of all utility to one creature which is based on the pain or destruction of any other; for in such services as are consistent with the essence and energy of both it takes delight, as in the clothing of the rock by the herbage, and the feeding of the herbage by the stream.

But still clearer evidence of its being indeed the expression

[1] Exiit ad cœlum ramis felicibus arbos.

of happiness to which we look for our first pleasure in organic form, is to be found in the way in which we regard the bodily frame of animals: of which it is to be noted first, that there is not anything which causes so intense and tormenting a sense of ugliness as any scar, wound, monstrosity, or imperfection which seems inconsistent with the animal's ease and health; and that although in vegetables, where there is no immediate sense of pain, we are comparatively little hurt by excrescences and irregularities, but are sometimes even delighted with them, and fond of them, as children of the oak-apple, and sometimes look upon them as more interesting than the uninjured conditions, as in the gnarled and knotted trunks of trees; yet the slightest approach to anything of the kind in animal form is regarded with intense horror, merely from the sense of pain it conveys.

And, in the second place, it is to be noted that whenever we dissect the animal frame, or conceive it as dissected, and substitute in our thoughts the neatness of mechanical contrivance for the pleasure of the animal; the moment we reduce enjoyment to ingenuity, and volition to leverage, that instant all sense of beauty ceases. Take, for instance, the action of the limb of the ostrich, which is beautiful so long as we see it in its swift uplifting along the Desert sands, and trace in the tread of it her scorn of the horse and his rider, but would infinitely lose of its impressiveness, if we could see the spring ligament playing backwards and forwards in alternate jerks over the tubercle at the hock joint. Take again the action of the dorsal fin of the shark tribe. So long as we observe the consistent energy of motion in the whole frame, the lash of the tail, bound of body, and instantaneous lowering of the dorsal, to avoid the resistance of the water, as it turns, there is high sense of organic power and beauty. But when we dissect the dorsal, and find that its superior ray is supported in its position by a peg in a notch at its base, and that, when the fin is to be lowered, the peg has to be taken out, and, when it is raised, put in again; although we are filled with wonder at the ingenuity of the mechanical contrivance, all our sense of beauty is gone, and not to be recovered until we again see the fin

playing on the animal's body, apparently by its own will alone, with the life running along its rays. It is by a beautiful ordinance of the Creator that all these mechanisms are concealed from sight, though open to investigation; and that in all which is outwardly manifested, we seem to see His presence rather than His workmanship, and the mysterious breath of life rather than the adaptation of matter.

If, therefore, as I think appears from all evidence, it is the sense of felicity which we first desire in organic form, those forms will be the most beautiful (always, observe, leaving typical beauty out of the question) which exhibit most of power, and seem capable of most quick and joyous sensation. Hence we find gradations of beauty, from the impenetrable hide and slow movement of the elephant and the rhinoceros, from the foul occupation of the vulture, from the earthy struggling of the worm, to the brilliancy of the moth, the buoyancy of the bird, the swiftness of the fawn and the horse, the fair and kingly sensibility of man.

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24. Mind and Body.

THE visible operation of the mind upon the body may be classed under three heads.

First, the operation of the intellectual powers upon the features, in the fine cutting and chiselling of them, and removal from them of signs of sensuality and sloth, by which they are blunted and deadened; and substitution of energy and intensity for vacancy and insipidity (by which wants alone the faces of many fair women are utterly spoiled and rendered valueless); and by the keenness given to the eye and fine moulding and development to the brow, of which effects Sir Charles Bell has well described the desirableness and opposition to brutal types; only this he has not sufficiently observed, that there are certain virtues of the intellect in measure inconsistent with each other, as perhaps great subtlety with great comprehensiveness, and high analytical with high imaginative power: or that at least, if consistent and compatible, their signs upon the features are not the

same, so that the outward form cannot express both, without in a measure expressing neither; and so there are certain separate virtues of the outward form correspondent with the more constant employment or more prevailing capacity of the brain, as the piercing keenness, or open and reflective comprehensiveness, of the eye and forehead: and that all these virtues of form are ideal, only those the most so which are the signs of the worthiest powers of intellect, though which these may be, we will not at present stay to inquire.

Secondly, the operation of the moral feelings conjointly with the intellectual powers on both the features and form. Now, the operation of the right moral feelings on the intellect is always for the good of the latter; for it is not possible that selfishness should reason rightly in any respect, but must be blind in its estimation of the worthiness of all things, neither anger, for that overpowers the reason or outcries it; neither sensuality, for that overgrows and chokes it; neither agitation, for that has no time to compare things together; neither enmity, for that must be unjust; neither fear, for that exaggerates all things; neither cunning and deceit, for that which is voluntarily untrue will soon be unwittingly so; but the great reasoners are self-command, and trust unagitated, and deep-looking Love, and Faith, which as she is above Reason, so she best holds the reins of it from her high seat; so that they err grossly who think of the right development even of the intellectual type as possible, unless we look to higher sources of beauty first. Nevertheless, though in their operation *upon* them the moral feelings are thus elevatory of the mental faculties, yet in their conjunction *with* them they seem to occupy, in their own fulness, such space as to absorb and overshadow all else; so that, the simultaneous exercise of both being in a sort impossible, we occasionally find the moral part in full development and action, without corresponding expansion of the intellect (though never without healthy condition of it), as in the condition described by Wordsworth,

> In such high hour
> Of visitation from the Living God,
> *Thought* was not;

only, if we look far enough, we shall perhaps find that it is not intelligence itself, but the immediate act and effort of a laborious, struggling, and imperfect intellectual faculty, with which high moral emotion is inconsistent; and though we cannot, while we feel deeply, *reason* shrewdly, yet I doubt if, *except* when we feel deeply, we can ever *comprehend* fully; so that it is only the climbing and mole-like piercing, and not the sitting upon their central throne, nor emergence into light, of the intellectual faculties, which the full heart feeling allows not. Hence, therefore, in the indications of the countenance, they are only the hard cut lines, and rigid settings, and wasted hollows, speaking of past effort and painfulness of mental application, which are inconsistent with expression of moral feeling, for all these are of infelicitous augury; but not the full and serene development of habitual command in the look, and solemn thought in the brow: only these in their unison with the signs of emotion, become softened and gradually confounded with a serenity and authority of nobler origin.

But of the sweetness which that higher serenity (of happiness), and the dignity which that higher authority (of divine law, and not human reason) can and must stamp on the features, it would be futile to speak here at length; for I suppose that both are acknowledged on all hands, and that there is not any beauty but theirs to which men pay long obedience: at all events, if not by sympathy discovered, it is not in words explicable with what divine lines and lights the exercise of godliness and charity will mould and gild the hardest and coldest countenance, neither to what darkness their departure will consign the loveliest. For there is not any virtue the exercise of which, even momentarily, will not impress a new fairness upon the features: neither on them only, but on the whole body, both the intelligence and the moral faculties have operation; for even all the movements and gestures, however slight, are different in their modes according to the mind that governs them; and on the gentleness and decision of just feeling there follows a grace of action, and, through continuance of this, a grace of form, which by no discipline may be taught or attained.

The third point to be considered with respect to the corporeal expression of mental character is, that there is a certain period of the soul-culture when it begins to interfere with some of the characters of typical beauty belonging to the bodily frame, the stirring of the intellect wearing down the flesh, and the moral enthusiasm burning its way out to heaven, through the emaciation of the earthen vessel; and that there is, in this indication of subduing of the mortal by the immortal part, an ideal glory of perhaps a purer and higher range than that of the more perfect material form. We conceive, I think, more nobly of the weak presence of Paul, than of the fair and ruddy countenance of Daniel.

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25. Destroyers of the Ideal Form.

Those signs of evil which are commonly most manifest on the human features are roughly divisible into these four kinds: the signs of pride, of sensuality, of fear, and of cruelty. Any one of which will destroy the ideal character of the countenance and body.

Now of these, the first, Pride, is perhaps the most destructive of all the four, seeing it is the undermost and original vice of all: and it is base also from the necessary foolishness of it, because at its best, when grounded on a just estimation of our own elevation or superiority above certain others, it cannot but imply that our eyes look downward only, and have never been raised above our own measure; for there is not the man so lofty in his standing or capacity, but he must be humble in thinking of the cloud habitation and far sight of the angelic intelligences above him; and in perceiving what infinity there is of things he cannot know, nor even reach unto, as it stands compared with that little body of things he can reach, and of which nevertheless he can altogether understand not one; not to speak of that wicked and fond attributing of such excellency as he may have to himself, and thinking of it as his own getting, which is the real essence and criminality of Pride; nor of those viler forms of it, founded on false estimation of things beneath us and

irrational contemning of them; but, taken at its best, it is still base to that degree that there is no grandeur of feature which it cannot destroy and make despicable, so that the first step towards the ennobling of any face is the ridding it of its vanity.

To which aim there cannot be anything more contrary than that principle of portraiture which prevails with us in these days, whose end seems to be the expression of vanity throughout, in face and in all circumstances of accompaniment; tending constantly to insolence of attitude, and levity and haughtiness of expression, and worked out farther in mean accompaniments of worldly splendour and possession; together with hints or proclamations of what the person has done or supposes himself to have done, which, if known, it is gratuitous in the portrait to exhibit, and, if unknown, it is insolent in the portrait to proclaim: whence has arisen such a school of portraiture as must make the people of the nineteenth century the shame of their descendants, and the butt of all time. To which practices are to be opposed both the glorious severity of Holbein, and the mighty and simple modesty of Raffaelle, Titian, Giorgione, and Tintoret, with whom armour does not constitute the warrior, neither silk the dame. And from what feeling the dignity of that portraiture arose is best traceable at Venice, where we find their victorious doges painted neither in the toil of battle nor the triumph of return; nor set forth with thrones and curtains of state, but kneeling, always crownless, and returning thanks to God for His help; or as priests interceding for the nation in its affliction. But this feeling and its results have been so well traced by Rio,[1] that I need not speak of it farther.

That second destroyer of ideal form, the appearance of Sensual character, though not less fatal in its operation on modern art, is more difficult to trace, owing to its peculiar subtlety. For it is not possible to say by what minute differences the right conception of the human form is separated from that which is luscious and foul: for the root of all is in the love and seeking of the painter, who, if of impure and feeble mind, will cover all that he touches with clay staining,

[1] *De la Poësie Chrétienne. Forme de l'Art*, chap. viii.

as Bandinelli puts a scent of common flesh about his marble Christ, and as many, whom I will not here name, among moderns; but if of mighty mind or pure, may pass through all places of foulness, and none will stay upon him, as Michael Angelo; or he will baptize all things and wash them with pure water, as our own Stothard. Now, so far as this power is dependent on the seeking of the artist, and is only to be seen in the work of good and spiritually-minded men, it is vain to attempt to teach or illustrate it; neither is it here the place to show how it belongs to the representation of the mental image of things, instead of things themselves, of which we are to speak in treating of the imagination; but thus much may here be noted of broad, practical principle, that the purity of flesh painting depends, in very considerable measure, on the intensity and warmth of its *colour*. For if it be opaque, and clay cold, and devoid of all the radiance and life of flesh, the lines of its true beauty, being severe and firm, will become so hard in the loss of the glow and gradation by which nature illustrates them, that the painter will be compelled to sacrifice them for a luscious fulness and roundness, in order to give the conception of flesh; which, being done, destroys ideality of form as of colour, and gives all over to lasciviousness of surface; showing also that the painter sought for this, and this only, since otherwise he had not taken a subject in which he knew himself compelled to surrender all sources of dignity. Whereas right splendour of colour both bears out a nobler severity of form, and is in itself purifying and cleansing, like fire; furnishing also to the painter an excuse for the choice of his subject, seeing that he may be supposed as not having painted it but in the admiration of its abstract glory of colour and form, and with no unworthy seeking.

But the mere power of perfect and glowing colour will, in some sort, redeem even a debased tendency of mind itself, as eminently the case with Titian, who, though often treating base subjects, or elevated subjects basely, as in the disgusting Magdalen of the Pitti Palace, and that of the Barberigo at Venice, yet redeems all by his glory of hue, so that he cannot paint altogether coarsely: and with

Giorgione, who had more imaginative intellect, the sense of nudity is utterly lost, and there is no need nor desire of concealment any more, but his naked figures move among the trees like fiery pillars, and lie on the grass like flakes of sunshine.[1]

With the religious painters, on the other hand, such nudity as they were compelled to treat is redeemed as much by severity of form and hardness of line as by colour, so that generally their draped figures are preferable. But they, with Michael Angelo and most of the Venetians, form a great group, pure in sight and aim, between which and all other schools by which the nude has been treated, there is a gulf fixed, and all the rest, compared with them, seem striving how best to illustrate Spenser's stanza in its second clause:

> Of all God's works which doe this worlde adorn,
> There is no one more faire, and excellent
> Than is man's body both for power and forme
> Whiles it is kept in sober government.
> But none than it more foul and indecent
> Distempered through misrule and passions bace.

Of these last, however, with whom ideality is lost, there are some worthier than others, according to that measure of colour they reach, and power they possess. Much may be forgiven to Rubens; less, as I think, to Correggio, who has more of inherent sensuality, wrought out with attractive and luscious refinement, and that alike in all subjects; as in the Madonna of the Incoronazione, over the high altar of San Giovanni at Parma, of which the head and upper portion of the figure, now preserved in the library, might serve as a model of attitude and expression to a ballet figurante:[2] and again in the lascivious St. Catherine of the Giorno, and in the Charioted Diana (both at Parma), not to name any of his works of aim more definitely evil. Beneath which again will fall the works devoid alike of art and decency, as that Susannah of Guido, in our own gallery;

[1] As in the noble Louvre picture.

[2] The Madonna turns her back to Christ, and bends her head over her shoulder to receive the crown, the arms being folded with studied grace over the bosom.

and so we may descend to the absolute clay of the moderns, excepting always Etty; only noticing in all how much of what is evil and base in subject or tendency, is redeemed by what is pure and right in hue; so that I do not assert that the purpose and object of many of the grander painters of the nude, as of Titian for instance, were always elevated, but only that we, who cannot paint the lamp of fire within the earthen pitcher, must take other weapons in our left hands. And it is to be noted also, that, in climates where the body can be more openly and frequently visited by sun and weather, the nude both comes to be regarded in a way more grand and pure, as necessarily awakening no ideas of base kind (as pre-eminently with the Greeks), and also from that exposure receives a firmness and sunny elasticity very different from the silky softness of the clothed nations of the north, where every model necessarily looks as if accidentally undressed; and hence, from the very fear and doubt with which we approach the nude, it becomes expressive of evil; and for that daring frankness of the old men, which seldom missed of human grandeur, even when it failed of holy feeling, we have substituted a mean, carpeted, gauze-veiled, mincing sensuality of curls and crisping-pins, out of which, I believe, nothing can come but moral enervation and mental paralysis.

Respecting those two other vices of the human form, the expressions of Fear and Ferocity, there is less to be noted, as they only occasionally enter into the conception of character; only it is most necessary to make careful distinction between the conception of power, destructiveness, or majesty, in matter, influence, or agent, and the actual fear of any of these: for it is possible to conceive of terribleness, without being in a position obnoxious to the danger of it, and so without fear; and the feeling arising from this contemplation of dreadfulness, ourselves being in safety, as of a stormy sea from the shore, is properly termed Awe, and is a most noble passion; whereas fear, mortal and extreme, may be felt respecting things ignoble, as the falling from a window, and without any conception of terribleness or majesty in the thing, or the accident dreaded; and even when fear is felt

respecting things sublime, as thunder, or storm of battle, the tendency of it is to destroy all power of contemplation of their majesty, and to freeze and contract all the intellect into a shaking heap of clay; for absolute acute fear is of the same unworthiness and contempt from whatever source it arise, and degrades the mind and the outward bearing of the body alike, even though it be among hail of heaven and fire running along the ground.

And so among the children of God, while there is always that fearful and bowed apprehension of His majesty, and that sacred dread of all offence to Him, which is called the Fear of God, yet of real and essential fear there is not any, but clinging of confidence to Him, as their Rock, Fortress, and Deliverer; and perfect love, and casting out of fear; so that it is not possible that, while the mind is rightly bent on Him, there should be dread of anything either earthly or supernatural; and the more dreadful seems the height of His majesty, the less fear they feel that dwell in the shadow of it ("Of whom shall I be afraid?"), so that they are as David was, "devoted to his fear;" whereas, on the other hand, those who, if they may help it, never conceive of God, but thrust away all thought and memory of Him, and in His real terribleness and omnipresence fear Him not nor know Him, yet are by real, acute, piercing, and ignoble fear, haunted for evermore; fear inconceiving and desperate, that calls to the rocks, and hides in the dust; and hence the peculiar baseness of the expression of terror, a baseness attributed to it in all times, and among all nations, as of a passion atheistical, brutal, and profane.

So, also, it is always joined with ferocity, which is of all passions the least human; for of sensual desires there is license to men, as necessity; and of vanity there is intellectual cause, so that when seen in a brute it is pleasant, and a sign of good wit; and of fear there is at times necessity and excuse, as being allowed for prevention of harm; but of ferocity there is no excuse nor palliation, but it is pure essence of tiger and demon, and it casts on the human face the paleness alike of the horse of Death, and the ashes of Hell.

26. Imagination Associative.

THIS is Imagination, properly so called; imagination associative, the grandest mechanical power that the human intelligence possesses, and one which will appear more and more marvellous the longer we consider it. By its operation, two ideas are chosen out of an infinite mass (for it evidently matters not whether the imperfections be conceived out of the infinite number conceivable, or selected out of a number recollected), two ideas which are *separately wrong*, which together shall be right, and of whose unity, therefore, the idea must be formed at the instant they are seized, as it is only in that unity that either is good, and therefore only the *conception of that unity can prompt the preference.* Now, what is that prophetic action of mind, which out of an infinite mass of things that cannot be tried together, seizes, at the same instant, two that are fit for each other; together right, yet each disagreeable alone.

This operation of mind, so far as I can see, is absolutely inexplicable, but there is something like it in chemistry.

The action of sulphuric acid on metallic zinc affords an instance of what was once called Disposing Affinity. Zinc decomposes pure water at common temperatures with extreme slowness; but as soon as sulphuric acid is added, decomposition of the water takes place rapidly, though the acid merely unites with oxide of zinc. The former explanation was, that the affinity of the acid for oxide of zinc disposed the metal to unite with oxygen, and thus enabled it to decompose water; that is, the oxide of zinc was supposed to produce an effect previous to its existence. The obscurity of this explanation arises from regarding changes as consecutive, which are in reality simultaneous. There is no succession in the process, the oxide of zinc is not formed previously to its combination with the acid, but at the same instant. There is, as it were, but one chemical change, which consists in the combination, at one and the same moment, of zinc with oxygen, and of oxide of zinc with the acid; and this change occurs because these

two affinities, acting together, overcome the attraction of oxygen and hydrogen for one another.[1]

Now, if the imaginative artist will permit us, with all deference, to represent his combining intelligence under the figure of sulphuric acid; and if we suppose the fragment of zinc to be embarrassed among infinitely numerous fragments of diverse metals, and the oxygen dispersed and mingled among gases countless and indistinguishable; we shall have an excellent type, in material things, of the action of the imagination on the immaterial. Both actions are, I think, inexplicable; for, however simultaneous the chemical changes may be, yet the causing power is the affinity of the acid for what has no existence. It is neither to be explained how that affinity operates on atoms uncombined, nor how the artist's desire for an unconceived whole prompts him to the selection of necessary divisions.

This operation would be wonderful enough, if it were concerned with two ideas only. But a powerfully imaginative mind seizes and combines at the same instant, not only two, but all the important ideas of its poem or picture; and while it works with any one of them, it is at the same instant work ing with and modifying all in their relations to it, never losing sight of their bearings on each other; as the motion of a snake's body goes through all parts at once, and its volition acts at the same instant in the coils that go contrary ways.

This faculty is indeed something that looks as if man were made after the image of God. It is inconceivable, admirable, altogether divine; and yet, wonderful as it may seem, it is palpably evident that no less an operation is necessary for the production of any great work: for, by the definition of Unity of Membership (the essential characteristic of greatness), not only certain couples or groups of parts, but *all* the parts of a noble work must be separately imperfect; each must imply, and ask for all the rest, and the glory of every one of them must consist in its relation to the rest; neither while so much as one is wanting can any be right.

[1] *Elements of Chemistry*, by the late Edward Turner, M.D., part ii., sect. iv.

And it is evidently impossible to conceive, in each separate feature, a certain want or wrongness which can only be corrected by the other features of the picture (not by one or two merely, but by all), unless, together with the want, we conceive also of what is wanted, that is, of all the rest of the work or picture. Hence Fuseli:

"Second thoughts are admissible in painting and poetry only as dressers of the first conception; no great idea was ever formed in fragments."

"He alone can conceive and compose who sees the whole at once before him."

There is, however, a limit to the power of all human imagination. When the relations to be observed are *absolutely* necessary, and highly complicated, the mind cannot grasp them; and the result is a total deprivation of all power of imagination associative in such matter. For this reason, no human mind has ever conceived a new animal. For as it is evident that in an animal, every part implies all the rest; that is, the form of the eye involves the form of the brow and nose, these the form of the forehead and lip, these of the head and chin, and so on, so that it is physically impossible to conceive of any one of these members, unless we conceive the relation it bears to the whole animal; and as this relation is necessary, certain, and complicated, allowing of no license or inaccuracy, the intellect utterly fails under the load, and is reduced to mere composition; putting the bird's wing on men's shoulders, or half the human body to half the horse's, in doing which there is no action of imagination, but only of fancy; though in the treatment and contemplation of the compound form there may be much imagination.

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27. Imagination Penetrative.

Every great conception of poet or painter is held and treated by this faculty. Every character that is so much as touched by men like Æschylus, Homer, Dante, or Shakspeare, is by them held by the heart; and every circumstance

or sentence of their being, speaking, or seeming, is seized by process from within, and is referred to that inner secret spring of which the hold is never lost for an instant: so that every sentence, as it has been thought out from the heart, opens for us a way down to the heart, leads us to the centre, and then leaves us to gather what more we may. It is the Open Sesame of a huge, obscure, endless cave, with inexhaustible treasure of pure gold scattered in it: the wandering about and gathering the pieces may be left to any of us, all can accomplish that; but the first opening of that invisible door in the rock is of the imagination only.

Hence there is in every word set down by the imaginative mind an awful under-current of meaning, and evidence and shadow upon it of the deep places out of which it has come. It is often obscure, often half-told; for he who wrote it, in his clear seeing of the things beneath, may have been impatient of detailed interpretation: but, if we choose to dwell upon it and trace it, it will lead us always securely back to that metropolis of the soul's dominion from which we may follow out all the ways and tracks to its farthest coasts.

I think the "Quel giorno più non vi leggemmo avante" of Francesca di Rimini, and the "He has no children" of Macduff, are as fine instances as can be given; but the sign and mark of it are visible on every line of the four great men above instanced.

The unimaginative writer on the other hand, as he has never pierced to the heart, so he can never touch it. If he has to paint a passion, he remembers the external signs of it, he collects expressions of it from other writers, he searches for similes, he composes, exaggerates, heaps term on term, figure on figure, till we groan beneath the cold disjointed heap: but it is all faggot and no fire; the life breath is not in it; his passion has the form of the leviathan, but it never makes the deep boil; he fastens us all at anchor in the scaly rind of it; our sympathies remain as idle as a painted ship upon a painted ocean.

And that virtue of originality that men so strain after is not newness, as they vainly think (there is nothing new), it is only genuineness; it all depends on this single glorious

faculty of getting to the spring of things and working out from that; it is the coolness, and clearness, and deliciousness of the water fresh from the fountain head, opposed to the thick, hot, unrefreshing drainage from other men's meadows.

This freshness, however, is not to be taken for an infallible sign of imagination, inasmuch as it results also from a vivid operation of fancy, whose parallel function to this division of the imaginative faculty it is here necessary to distinguish.

I believe it will be found that the entirely unimaginative mind *sees* nothing of the object it has to dwell upon or describe, and is therefore utterly unable, as it is blind itself, to set anything before the eyes of the reader.[1]

The fancy sees the outside, and is able to give a portrait of the outside, clear, brilliant, and full of detail.

The imagination sees the heart and inner nature, and makes them felt, but is often obscure, mysterious, and interrupted, in its giving of outer detail.

Take an instance. A writer with neither imagination nor fancy, describing a fair lip, does not see it, but thinks abour it, and about what is said of it, and calls it well turned, ot rosy, or delicate, or lovely, or afflicts us with some other quenching and chilling epithet. Now hear Fancy speak:

> Her lips were red, and one was thin,
> Compared with that was next her chin,
> Some bee had stung it newly.[2]

The real, red, bright being of the lip is there in a moment. But it is all outside; no expression yet, no mind. Let us go a step farther with Warner, of Fair Rosamond struck by Eleanor:

> With that she dashed her on the lips
> So dyëd double red;
> Hard was the heart that gave the blow,
> Soft were those lips that bled.

The tenderness of mind begins to mingle with the outside

[1] Compare Arist., *Rhet.*, iii., 11.

[2] I take this and the next instance from Leigh Hunt's admirable piece of criticism, *Imagination and Fancy*, which ought to be read with care, and to which, though somewhat loosely arranged, I may refer for all the filling up and illustration that the subject requires.

colour, the Imagination is seen in its awakening. Next Shelley:

> Lamp of life, thy lips are burning
> Through the veil that seems to hide them,
> As the radiant lines of morning
> Through thin clouds ere they divide them.

There dawns the entire soul in that morning; yet we may stop if we choose at the image still external, at the crimson clouds. The imagination is contemplative rather than penetrative. Last, hear Hamlet:

> Here hung those lips that I have kissed, I know not how oft. Where be your gibes now, your gambols, your songs, your flashes of merriment that were wont to set the table on a roar?

There is the essence of lip, and the full power of the imagination.

Again, compare Milton's flowers in Lycidas with Perdita's. In Milton it happens, I think, generally, and in the case before us most certainly, that the imagination is mixed and broken with fancy, and so the strength of the imagery is part of iron and part of clay:

Bring the rathe primrose, that forsaken dies,	*Imagination.*
The tufted crow-toe, and pale jessamine,	*Nugatory.*
The white pink, and the pansy freaked with jet,	*Fancy.*
The glowing violet,	*Imagination.*
The musk rose, and the well-attired woodbine,	*Fancy*, vulgar.
With cowslips wan that hang the pensive head,	*Imagination.*
And every flower that sad embroidery wears.	*Mixed.*

Then hear Perdita:

> O Proserpina,
> For the flowers now, that, frighted, thou let'st fall
> From Dis's waggon! daffodils,
> That come before the swallow dares, and take
> The winds of March with beauty; violets, dim,
> But sweeter than the lids of Juno's eyes,
> Or Cytherea's breath; pale primroses,
> That die unmarried, ere they can behold
> Bright Phœbus in his strength, a malady
> Most incident to maids.

Observe how the imagination in these last lines goes into

the very inmost soul of every flower, after having touched them all at first with that heavenly timidness, the shadow of Proserpine's, and gilded them with celestial gathering, and never stops on their spots, or their bodily shape; while Milton sticks in the stains upon them, and puts us off with that unhappy freak of jet in the very flower that, without this bit of paper-staining, would have been the most precious to us of all. "There is pansies, that's for thoughts."

So, I believe, it will be found throughout the operation of the fancy, that it has to do with the outsides of things, and is content therewith; of this there can be no doubt in such passages as that description of Mab so often given as an illustration of it, and many other instances will be found in Leigh Hunt's work already referred to. Only some embarrassment is caused by passages in which Fancy is seizing the outward signs of emotion, understanding them as such, and yet, in pursuance of her proper function, taking for her share, and for that which she chooses to dwell upon, the outside sign rather than the emotion. Note in *Macbeth* that brilliant instance:

> Where the Norweyan banners flout the sky,
> And fan our people cold.

The outward shiver and coldness of fear is seized on, and irregularly but admirably attributed by the fancy to the drift of the banners. Compare Solomon's Song, where the imagination stays not at the outside, but dwells on the fearful emotion itself:

> Who is she that looketh forth as the morning; fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners?

Now, if these be the prevailing characteristics of the two faculties, it is evident that certain other collateral differences will result from them. Fancy, as she stays at the externals, can never feel. She is one of the hardest-hearted of the intellectual faculties, or rather one of the most purely and simply intellectual. She cannot be made serious,[1] no edge-

[1] Fancy, in her third function, may, however, become serious, and gradually rise into imagination in doing so.

tools but she will play with. Whereas the Imagination is in all things the reverse. She cannot be but serious; she sees too far, too darkly, too solemnly, too earnestly, ever to smile. There is something in the heart of everything, if we can reach it, that we shall not be inclined to laugh at. And thus there is reciprocal action between the intensity of moral feeling and the power of imagination; for, on the one hand, those who have keenest sympathy are those who look closest and pierce deepest, and hold securest; and, on the other, those who have so pierced and seen the melancholy deeps of things are filled with the most intense passion and gentleness of sympathy. Hence, I suppose that the powers of the imagination may always be tested by accompanying tenderness of emotion; and thus, as Byron said, there is no tenderness like Dante's, neither any intensity nor seriousness like his, such seriousness that it is incapable of perceiving that which is commonplace or ridiculous, but fuses all down into its own white-hot fire.

And, on the other hand, I suppose the chief bar to the action of imagination, and stop to all greatness in this present age of ours, is its mean and shallow love of jest; so that if there be in any good and lofty work a flaw, failing, or undipped vulnerable part, where sarcasm may stick or stay, it is caught at, and pointed at, and buzzed about, and fixed upon, and stung into, as a recent wound is by flies; and nothing is ever taken seriously or as it was meant, but always, if it may be, turned the wrong way, and misunderstood: and while this is so, there is not, nor cannot be, any hope of achievement of high things; men dare not open their hearts to us, if we are to broil them on a thorn-fire.

This, then, is one essential difference between imagination and fancy; and another is like it and resultant from it, that the imagination being at the heart of things, poises herself there, and is still, quiet, and brooding, comprehending all around her with her fixed look; but the fancy staying at the outside of things, cannot see them all at once, but runs hither and thither, and round and about to see more and more, bounding merrily from point to point, and glittering here and there, but necessarily always settling, if she settle at all, on a

point only, never embracing the whole. And from these single points she can strike out analogies and catch resemblances, which, so far as the point she looks at is concerned, are true, but would be false, if she could see through to the other side. This, however, she cares not to do; the point of contact is enough for her, and even if there be a gap left between the two things and they do not quite touch, she will spring from one to the other like an electric spark, and be seen brighest in her leaping.

* * * * * *

The most exquisite instance of this imaginative power occurs in an incident in the background of Tintoret's Crucifixion. I will not insult this marvellous picture by an effort at a verbal account of it. I would not whitewash it with praise, and I refer to it only for the sake of two thoughts peculiarly illustrative of the intellectual faculty immediately under discussion. In the common and most Catholic treatment of the subject, the mind is either painfully directed to the bodily agony, coarsely expressed by outward anatomical signs, or else it is permitted to rest on that countenance inconceivable by man at any time, but chiefly so in this its consummated humiliation. In the first case, the representation is revolting; in the second, inefficient, false, and sometimes blasphemous. None even of the greatest religious painters have ever, so far as I know, succeeded here: Giotto and Angelico were cramped by the traditional treatment, and the latter especially, as before observed, is but too apt to indulge in those points of vitiated feeling which attained their worst development among the Byzantines; Perugino fails in his Christ in almost every instance: of other men than these, after them, we need not speak. But Tintoret here, as in all other cases, penetrating into the root and deep places of his subject, despising all outward and bodily appearances of pain, and seeking for some means of expressing, not the rack of nerve or sinew, but the fainting of the deserted Son of God before his *Eloi* cry, and yet feeling himself utterly unequal to the expression of this by the countenance, has, on the one hand, filled his picture with such various and impetuous muscular exertion, that the

body of the Crucified is, by comparison, in perfect repose, and, on the other, has cast the countenance altogether into shade. But the Agony is told by this, and by this only; that, though there yet remains a chasm of light on the mountain horizon where the earthquake darkness closes upon the day, the broad and sunlike glory about the head of the Redeemer has become wan, *and of the colour of ashes.*[1]

But the great painter felt he had something more to do yet. Not only that Agony of the Crucified, but the tumult of the people, that rage which invoked His blood upon them and their children. Not only the brutality of the soldier, the apathy of the Centurion, or any other merely instrumental cause of the Divine suffering, but the fury of His own people, the noise against Him of those for whom He died, were to be set before the eye of the understanding, if the power of the picture was to be complete. This rage, be it remembered, was one of disappointed pride; and the disappointment dated essentially from the time when, but five days before, the King of Zion came, and was received with hosannahs, riding upon an ass, and a colt the foal of an ass. To this time, then, it was necessary to direct the thoughts, for therein are found both the cause and the character, the excitement of, and the witness against, this madness of the people. In the shadow behind the cross, a man, riding on an ass colt, looks back to the multitude, while he points with a rod to the Christ crucified. The ass is feeding on the *remnants* of *withered palm-leaves.*

With this master-stroke, I believe, I may terminate all illustration of the peculiar power of the imagination over the feelings of the spectator, by the elevation into dignity and meaning of the smallest accessory circumstances. But I have not yet sufficiently dwelt on the fact from which this power arises, the absolute truth of statement of the central fact as it was, or must have been. Without this truth, this awful first moving principle, all direction of the feelings is

[1] This circumstance, like most that lie not at the surface, has escaped Fuseli, though his remarks on the general tone of the picture are very good, as well as his opposition of it to the treatment of Rubens. (Lecture ix.)

useless. That which we cannot excite, it is of no use to know how to govern.

28. Imagination Contemplative.

THE form in which conception actually occurs to ordinary minds appears to derive value and preciousness from that indefiniteness which we have already alluded to; for there is an unfailing charm in the memory and anticipation of things beautiful, more sunny and spiritual than attaches to their presence; for with their presence it is possible to be sated, and even wearied, but with the imagination of them never; in so far that it needs some self-discipline to prevent the mind from falling into a morbid condition of dissatisfaction with all that it immediately possesses, and continual longing for things absent: and yet I think this charm is not justly to be attributed to the mere vagueness and uncertainty of the conception, except thus far, that of objects whose substantial presence was painful, the sublimity and impressiveness, if there were any, are retained in the conception, while the sensual offensiveness is withdrawn; thus circumstances of horror may be safely touched in verbal description, and for a time dwelt upon by the mind, as often by Homer and Spenser (by the latter frequently with too much grossness), which could not for a moment be regarded or tolerated in their reality, or on canvass; and besides this mellowing and softening operation on those it retains, the conceptive faculty has the power of letting go many of them altogether out of its groups of ideas, and retaining only those where the meminisse juvabit will apply; and in this way the entire group of memories becomes altogether delightful.

But of those parts of anything which are in themselves beautiful, I think the indistinctness no benefit, but that the brighter they are the better; and that the peculiar charm we feel in conception results from its grasp and blending of ideas rather than from their obscurity; for we do not usually recall, as we have seen, one part at a time only of a pleasant scene, one moment only of a happy day; but

together with each single object we summon up a kind of crowded and involved shadowing forth of all the other glories with which it was associated, and into every moment we concentrate an epitome of the day; and it will happen frequently that even when the visible objects or actual circumstances are not in detail remembered, the feeling and joy of them are obtained we know not how or whence: and so, with a kind of conceptive burning-glass, we bend the sunshine of all the day, and the fulness of all the scene upon every point that we successively seize; and this together with more vivid action of Fancy, for I think that the wilful and playful seizures of the points that suit her purpose, and help her springing, whereby she is distinguished from simple conception, take place more easily and actively with the memory of things than in presence of them. But, however this be, and I confess that there is much that I cannot satisfactorily to myself unravel with respect to the nature of simple conception, it is evident that this agreeableness, whatever it be, is not by art attainable, for all art is, in some sort, realization; it may be the realization of obscurity or indefiniteness, but still it must differ from the mere *conception* of obscurity and indefiniteness; so that whatever emotions depend absolutely on imperfectness of conception, as the horror of Milton's Death, cannot be rendered by art; for art can only lay hold of things which have shape, and destroys by its touch the fearfulness or pleasurableness of those which shape have none.

But on this indistinctness of conception, itself comparatively valueless and unaffecting, is based the operation of the Imaginative faculty with which we are at present concerned, and in which its glory is consummated; whereby, depriving the subject of material and bodily shape, and regarding such of its qualities only as it chooses for particular purpose, it forges these qualities together in such groups and forms as it desires, and gives to their abstract being consistency and reality, by striking them as it were with the die of an image belonging to other matter, which stroke having once received, they pass current at once in the peculiar conjunction and for the peculiar value desired.

Thus, in the description of Satan quoted in the First Chapter, "And like a comet burned," the bodily shape of the angel is destroyed, the inflaming of the formless spirit is alone regarded; and this, and his power of evil, associated in one fearful and abstract conception, are stamped to give them distinctness and permanence with the image of the comet, "That fires the length of Ophiuchus huge." Yet this could not be done, but that the image of the comet itself is in a measure indistinct, capable of awful expansion, and full of threatening and fear. Again, in his fall, the imagination gathers up the thunder, the resistance, the massy prostration, separates them from the external form, and binds them together by the help of that image of the mountain half sunk; which again would be unfit but for its own indistinctness, and for that glorious addition "with all his pines," whereby a vitality and spear-like hostility are communicated to its falling form; and the fall is marked as not utter subversion, but sinking only, the pines remaining in their uprightness and unity and threatening of darkness upon the descended precipice; and again, in that yet more noble passage at the close of the fourth book, where almost every operation of the contemplative imagination is concentrated; the angelic squadron first gathered into one burning mass by the single expression "sharpening in mooned horns," then told out in their unity and multitude and stooped hostility, by the image of the wind upon the corn; Satan endowed with godlike strength and endurance in that mighty line, "Like Teneriff or Atlas, unremoved," with infinitude of size the next instant, and with all the vagueness and terribleness of spiritual power, by the "Horrour plumed," and the "*what seemed* both spear and shield."

The third function of Fancy, already spoken of as subordinate to this of the Imagination, is the highest of which she is capable; like the Imagination, she beholds in the things submitted to her treatment things different from the actual; but the suggestions she follows are not in their nature essential in the object contemplated; and the images resulting, instead of illustrating, may lead the mind away from it, and change the current of contemplative feeling:

for, as in her operation parallel to Imagination penetrative we saw her dwelling upon external features, while the nobler sister faculty entered within; so now, when both, from what they see and know in their immediate object, are conjuring up images illustrative or elevatory of it, the Fancy necessarily summons those of mere external relationship, and therefore of unaffecting influence; while the Imagination, by every ghost she raises, tells tales about the prison house, and therefore never loses her power over the heart, nor her unity of emotion. On the other hand, the regardant or contemplative action of Fancy is in this different from, and in this nobler than, that mere seizing and likeness-catching operation we saw in her before; that, when contemplative, she verily believes in the truth of the vision she has summoned, loses sight of actuality, and beholds the new and spiritual image faithfully and even seriously; whereas, before, she summoned no spiritual image, but merely caught the vivid actuality, or the curious resemblance of the real object; not that these two operations are separate, for the Fancy passes gradually from mere vivid sight of reality, and witty suggestion of likeness, to a ghostly sight of what is unreal; and through this, in proportion as she begins to feel, she rises towards and partakes of Imagination itself; for Imagination and Fancy are continually united, and it is necessary, when they are so, carefully to distinguish the feelingless part which is Fancy's, from the sentient part, which is Imagination's. Let us take a few instances. Here is Fancy, first, very beautiful, in her simple capacity of likeness-catching:

> To day we purpose—ay, this hour we mount,
> To spur three leagues towards the Apennine.
> Come down, we pray thee, ere the *hot sun count*
> *His dewy rosary* on the eglantine.

Seizing on the outside resemblances of bead form, and on the slipping from their threading bough one by one, the fancy is content to lose the heart of the thing, the solemnity of prayer: or perhaps I do the glorious poet wrong in saying this, for the sense of a sun worship and orison in beginning its race, may have been in his mind; and so

far as it was so, the passage is imaginative and not fanciful. But that which most readers would accept from it, is the mere flash of the external image, in whose truth the Fancy herself does not yet believe, and therefore is not yet contemplative. Here, however, is Fancy believing in the images she creates:

> It feeds the quick growth of the serpent-vine,
> And the dark linked ivy tangling wild,
> And budding, blown, or odour-faded blooms,
> Which *star the winds with points of coloured light*
> As they rain through them; and *bright golden globes*
> *Of fruit suspended in their own green heaven.*

It is not, observe, a mere likeness that is caught here; but the flowers and fruit are entirely deprived by the fancy of their material existence, and contemplated by her seriously and faithfully as stars and worlds; yet it is only external likeness that she catches; she forces the resemblance, and lowers the dignity of the adopted image.

Next take two delicious stanzas of Fancy regardant (believing in her creations), followed by one of heavenly imagination, from Wordsworth's address to the daisy:

> A Nun demure—of lowly port;
> Or sprightly maiden—of Love's court—
> In thy simplicity the sport
> Of all temptations.
> A Queen in crown of rubies drest,
> A starveling in a scanty vest,
> Are all as seems to suit thee best—
> Thy appellations.
>
> I see thee glittering from afar,
> And then thou art a pretty star—
> Not quite so fair as many are
> In heaven above thee.
> Yet like a star, with glittering crest,
> Self-poised in air thou seem'st to rest—
> May peace come never to his nest
> Who shall reprove thee!
>
> Sweet flower—for by that name at last,
> When all my reveries are past,

I call thee, and to that cleave fast—
Sweet silent creature,
That breath'st with me, in sun and air,
Do thou, as thou art wont, repair
My heart with gladness, and a share
Of thy meek nature.

Observe how spiritual, yet how wandering and playful, the fancy is in the first two stanzas, and how far she flies from the matter in hand; never stopping to brood on the character of any one of the images she summons, and yet for a moment truly seeing and believing in them all; while in the last stanza the imagination returns with its deep feeling to the heart of the flower, and "*cleaves fast*" to that. Compare the operation of the Imagination in Coleridge, on one of the most trifling objects that could possibly have been submitted to its action:

The thin blue flame
Lies on my low-burnt fire, and quivers not:
Only that film which fluttered on the grate
Still flutters there, the sole unquiet thing.
Methinks its motion in this hush of nature
Gives it dim sympathies with me, who live,
Making it a companionable form,
Whose puny flaps and freaks the idling spirit
By its own moods interprets, every where
Echo or mirror seeking of itself,
And makes a toy of thought.

Lastly, observe the sweet operation of Fancy regardant, in the following well-known passage from Scott, where both her beholding and transforming powers are seen in their simplicity:

The rocky summits, split and rent,
Formed turret, dome, or battlement,
Or seemed fantastically set
With cupola or minaret.
Nor were these earth-born castles bare,
Nor lacked they many a banner fair,
For, from their shivered brows displayed,
Far o'er th' unfathomable glade,
All twinkling with the dew-drop sheen,
The briar-rose fell, in streamers green—
And creeping shrubs of thousand dyes
Waved in the west wind's summer sighs.

Let the reader refer to this passage, with its pretty tremulous conclusion above the pine tree, "where glistening streamers waved and danced," and then compare with it the following, where the Imagination operates on a scene nearly similar :

> Grey rocks did peep from the spare moss, and stemmed
> The struggling brook ; tall spires of windlestrae
> Threw their thin shadows down the rugged slope,
> And nought but gnarled roots of ancient pines,
> Branchless and blasted, clenched, with grasping roots,
> Th' unwilling soil. . . .
> . . . . . A gradual change was here,
> Yet ghastly. For, *as fast years flow away,*
> *The smooth brow gathers, and the hair grows thin*
> *And white ; and, where irradiate dewy eyes*
> *Had shone, gleam stony orbs : so from his steps*
> *Bright flowers departed, and the beautiful shade*
> *Of the green groves, with all their odorous winds*
> *And musical motions.* . . . . .
> . . . . . .
> . . . . . Where the pass extends
> Its stony jaws, the abrupt mountain breaks,
> And seems with its accumulated crags
> To overhang the world ; for wide expand
> Beneath the wan stars, and descending moon,
> Islanded seas, blue mountains, mighty streams,
> *Dim tracts and vast, robed in the lustrous gloom*
> *Of leaden-coloured even, and fiery hills*
> *Mingling their flames with twilight,* on the verge
> Of the remote horizon. The near scene,
> In naked and severe simplicity,
> Made contrast with the universe. A pine
> Rock-rooted, stretch'd athwart the vacancy
> Its swinging boughs, to each *inconstant blast*
> *Yielding one only response at each pause,*
> In most familiar cadence, with the howl,
> The thunder, and the hiss of *homeless* streams,
> Mingling its solemn song.

In this last passage, the mind never departs from its solemn possession of the solitary scene, the Imagination only giving weight, meaning, and strange human sympathies to all its sights and sounds.

In that from Scott[1] the Fancy, led away by the outside

[1] Let it not be supposed that I mean to compare the sickly dreaming of Shelley over clouds and waves, with the masculine and magnificent

resemblance of floating form and hue to the banners, loses the feeling and possession of the scene, and places herself in circumstances of character completely opposite to the quietness and grandeur of the natural objects; this would have been unjustifiable, but that the resemblance occurs to the mind of the monarch, rather than to that of the poet; and it is that, which, of all others, would have been the most likely to occur at the time; in this point of view it has high imaginative propriety. Of the same fanciful character is that transformation of the tree trunks into dragons noticed before in Turner's Jason; and in the same way this becomes imaginative, as it exhibits the effect of Fear in disposing to morbid perception. Compare with it the real and high action of the Imagination on the same matter in Wordsworth's Yew trees (perhaps the most vigorous and solemn bit of forest landscape ever painted):

> Each particular trunk a growth
> Of intertwisted fibres serpentine,
> Up-coiling and inveterately convolved,
> *Nor uninformed with Phantasy, and looks*
> *That threaten the profane.*

It is too long to quote, but the reader should refer to it: let him note especially, if painter, that pure touch of colour, "By sheddings from the pining umbrage tinged."

In the same way the blasted trunk on the left, in Turner's drawing of the spot where Harold fell at the battle of Hastings, takes, where its boughs first separate, the shape of the head of an arrow; this, which is mere fancy in itself, is imagination as it supposes in the spectator an excited condition of feeling dependent on the history of the spot.

I have been led perhaps into too great detail in illustrating

grasp of men and things which we find in Scott; it only happens that these two passages are more illustrative, by the likeness of the scenery they treat, than any others I could have opposed, and that Shelley is peculiarly distinguished by the faculty of Contemplative Imagination. Scott's healthy and truthful feeling would not allow him to represent the benighted hunter, provoked by loss of game, horse, and way at once, as indulging in any more exalted flights of imagination than those naturally consequent on the contrast between the night's lodging he expected, and that which befitted him.

these points; but I think it is of no small importance to prove how in all cases the Imagination is based upon, and appeals to, a deep heart feeling; and how faithful and earnest it is in contemplation of the subject-matter, never losing sight of it, nor disguising it, but depriving it of extraneous and material accidents, and regarding it in its disembodied essence. I have not, however, sufficiently noted, in opposition to it, that diseased action of the fancy which depends more on nervous temperament than intellectual power; and which, as in dreaming, fever, insanity, and other morbid conditions of mind, is frequently a source of daring and inventive conception; and so the visionary appearances resulting from disturbances of the frame by passion, and from the rapid tendency of the mind to invest with shape and intelligence the active influences about it, as in the various demons, spirits, and fairies, of all imaginative nations; which, however, I consider are no more to be ranked as right creations of fancy or imagination than things actually seen and heard; for the action of the nerves is, I suppose, the same, whether externally caused, or from within, although very grand imagination may be shown by the intellectual anticipation and realization of such impressions, as in that glorious vignette of Turner's to the voyage of Columbus. "Slowly along the evening sky they went." Note especially how admirably true to the natural form, and yet how suggestive of the battlement, he has rendered the level flake of evening cloud.

VOLUME III.

29. The Nature of Poetry.

I COME, after some embarrassment, to the conclusion, that poetry is "the suggestion, by the imagination, of noble grounds for the noble emotions." I mean, by the noble emotions, those four principal sacred passions: Love, Veneration, Admiration, and Joy (this latter especially, if unselfish); and their opposites: Hatred, Indignation (or Scorn), Horror, and Grief—this last, when unselfish, becoming Compassion. These passions in their various combinations constitute what is called "poetical feeling," when they are felt on noble grounds, that is, on great and true grounds. Indignation, for instance, is a poetical feeling, if excited by serious injury; but it is not a poetical feeling if entertained on being cheated out of a small sum of money. It is very possible the manner of the cheat may have been such as to justify considerable indignation; but the feeling is nevertheless not poetical unless the grounds of it be large as well as just. In like manner, energetic admiration may be excited in certain minds by a display of fireworks, or a street of handsome shops; but the feeling is not poetical, because the grounds of it are false, and therefore ignoble. There is in reality nothing to deserve admiration either in the firing of packets of gunpowder, or in the display of the stocks of warehouses. But admiration excited by the budding of a flower is a poetical feeling, because it is impossible that this manifestation of spiritual power and vital beauty can ever be enough admired.

Farther, it is necessary to the existence of poetry that the grounds of these feelings should be *furnished by the*

imagination. Poetical feeling, that is to say, mere noble emotion, is not poetry. It is happily inherent in all human nature deserving the name, and is found often to be purest in the least sophisticated. But the power of assembling, by *the help of the imagination*, such images as will excite these feelings, is the power of the poet or literally of the "Maker."[1]

Now this power of exciting the emotions depends of course

[1] Take, for instance, the beautiful stanza in *The Affliction of Margaret:*

I look for ghosts, but none will force
Their way to me. 'Tis falsely said
That ever there was intercourse
Between the living and the dead;
For, surely then, I should have sight
Of him I wait for, day and night,
With love and longing infinite.

This we call Poetry, because it is invented *or made* by the writer, entering into the mind of a supposed person. Next, take an instance of the actual feeling truly experienced and simply expressed by a real person.

Nothing surprised me more than a woman of Argentière, whose cottage I went into to ask for milk, as I came down from the glacier of Argentière, in the month of March, 1764. An epidemic dysentery had prevailed in the village, and, a few months before, had taken away from her, her father, her husband, and her brothers, so that she was left alone, with three children in the cradle. Her face had something noble in it, and its expression bore the seal of a calm and profound sorrow. After having given me milk, she asked me whence I came, and what I came there to do, so early in the year. When she knew that I was of Geneva, she said to me, "she could not believe that all Protestants were lost souls; that there were many honest people among us, and that God was too good and too great to condemn all without distinction." Then, after a moment of reflection, she added, in shaking her head, "But, that which is very strange, is that of so many who have gone away, none have ever returned. I," she added, with an expression of grief, "who have so mourned my husband and my brothers, who have never ceased to think of them, who every night conjure them with beseechings to tell me where they are, and in what state they are! Ah, surely, if they lived anywhere, they would not leave me thus! But, perhaps," she added, "I am not worthy of this kindness, perhaps the pure and innocent spirits of these children," and she looked at the cradle, "may have their presence, and the joy which is denied to *me.*"—SAUSSURE, *Voyages dans les Alpes*, chap. xxiv.

This we do not call Poetry, merely because it is not invented, but the true utterance of a real person.

on the richness of the imagination, and on its choice of those images which, in combination, will be most effective, or, for the particular work to be done, most fit. And it is altogether impossible for a writer not endowed with invention to conceive what tools a true poet will make use of, or in what way he will apply them, or what unexpected results he will bring out by them; so that it is vain to say that the details of poetry ought to possess, or ever do possess, any *definite* character. Generally speaking, poetry runs into finer and more delicate details than prose; but the details are not poetical because they are more delicate, but because they are employed so as to bring out an affecting result. For instance, no one but a true poet would have thought of exciting our pity for a bereaved father by describing his way of locking the door of his house:

> Perhaps to himself, at that moment he said,
> The key I must take, for my Ellen is dead;
> But of this in my ears not a word did he speak,
> And he went to the chase with a tear on his cheek.

In like manner, in painting, it is altogether impossible to say beforehand what details a great painter may make poetical by his use of them to excite noble emotions: and we shall, therefore, find presently that a painting is to be classed in the great or inferior schools, not according to the kind of details which it represents, but according to the uses for which it employs them.

It is only farther to be noticed, that infinite confusion has been introduced into this subject by the careless and illogical custom of opposing painting to poetry, instead of regarding poetry as consisting in a noble use, whether of colours or words. Painting is properly to be opposed to *speaking* or *writing*, but not to *poetry*. Both painting and speaking are methods of expression. Poetry is the employment of either for the noblest purposes.

30. Greatness of Style.

I. Choice of Noble Subject. Now greatness of style consists: first, in the habitual choice of subjects of thought which involve wide interests and profound passions, as opposed to those which involve narrow interests and slight passions. The style is greater or less in exact proportion to the nobleness of the interests and passions involved in the subject. The habitual choice of sacred subjects, such as the Nativity, Transfiguration, Crucifixion (if the choice be sincere), implies that the painter has a natural disposition to dwell on the highest thoughts of which humanity is capable; it constitutes him so far forth a painter of the highest order, as, for instance, Leonardo, in his painting of the Last Supper: he who delights in representing the acts or meditations of great men, as, for instance, Raphael painting the School of Athens, is, so far forth, a painter of the second order: he who represents the passions and events of ordinary life, of the third. And in this ordinary life, he who represents deep thoughts and sorrows, as, for instance, Hunt, in his Claudio and Isabella, and such other works, is of the highest rank in his sphere; and he who represents the slight malignities and passions of the drawing-room, as, for instance, Leslie, of the second rank; he who represents the sports of boys or simplicities of clowns, as Webster or Teniers, of the third rank; and he who represents brutalities and vices (for delight in them, and not for rebuke of them), of no rank at all, or rather of a negative rank, holding a certain order in the abyss.

The reader will, I hope, understand how much importance is to be attached to the sentence in the first parenthesis, "if the choice be sincere;" for choice of subject is, of course, only available as a criterion of the rank of the painter, when it is made from the heart. Indeed, in the lower orders of painting, the choice is always made from such heart as the painter has; for his selection of the brawls of peasants or sports of children can, of course, proceed only from the fact that he has more sympathy

with such brawls or pastimes than with nobler subjects. But the choice of the higher kind of subjects is often insincere; and may, therefore, afford no real criterion of the painter's rank. The greater number of men who have lately painted religious or heroic subjects have done so in mere ambition, because they had been taught that it was a good thing to be a "high art" painter; and the fact is that, in nine cases out of ten, the so-called historical or "high art" painter is a person infinitely inferior to the painter of flowers or still life. He is, in modern times, nearly always a man who has great vanity without pictorial capacity, and differs from the landscape or fruit painter merely in misunderstanding and overestimating his own powers. He mistakes his vanity for inspiration, his ambition for greatness of soul, and takes pleasure in what he calls "the ideal," merely because he has neither humility nor capacity enough to comprehend the real.

But also observe, it is not enough even that the choice be sincere. It must also be wise. It happens very often that a man of weak intellect, sincerely desiring to do what is good and useful, will devote himself to high art subjects because he thinks them the only ones on which time and toil can be usefully spent, or, sometimes, because they are really the only ones he has pleasure in contemplating. But not having intellect enough to enter into the minds of truly great men, or to imagine great events as they really happened, he cannot become a great painter; he degrades the subjects he intended to honour, and his work is more utterly thrown away, and his rank as an artist in reality lower, than if he had devoted himself to the imitation of the simplest objects of natural history. The works of Overbeck are a most notable instance of this form of error.

It must also be remembered, that in nearly all the great periods of art the choice of subject has not been left to the painter. His employer—abbot, baron, or monarch—determined for him whether he should earn his bread by making cloisters bright with choirs of saints, painting coats of arms on leaves of romances, or decorating presence-chambers with complimentary mythology; and his own personal feelings are

ascertainable only by watching, in the themes assigned to him, what are the points in which he seems to take most pleasure. Thus, in the prolonged ranges of varied subjects with which Benozzo Gozzoli decorated the cloisters of Piza, it is easy to see that love of simple domestic incident, sweet landscape, and glittering ornament, prevails slightly over the solemn elements of religious feeling, which, nevertheless, the spirit of the age instilled into him in such measure as to form a very lovely and noble mind, though still one of the second order. In the work of Orcagna, an intense solemnity and energy in the sublimest groups of his figures, fading away as he touches inferior subjects, indicates that his home was among the archangels, and his rank among the first of the sons of men; while Correggio, in the sidelong grace, artificial smiles, and purple languors of his saints, indicates the inferior instinct which would have guided his choice in quite other directions, had it not been for the fashion of the age, and the need of the day.....

II. Love of Beauty. The second characteristic of the great school of art is, that it introduces in the conception of its subject as much beauty as is possible, consistently with truth.[1]

[1] As here, for the first time, I am obliged to use the terms Truth and Beauty in a kind of opposition. I must therefore stop for a moment to state clearly the relation of these two qualities of art; and to protest against the vulgar and foolish habit of confusing truth and beauty with each other. People with shallow powers of thought, desiring to flatter themselves with the sensation of having attained profundity, are continually doing the most serious mischief by introducing confusion into plain matters, and then valuing themselves on being confounded. Nothing is more common than to hear people who desire to be thought philosophical, declare that "beauty is truth," and "truth is beauty." I would most earnestly beg every sensible person who hears such an assertion made, to nip the germinating philosopher in his ambiguous bud; and beg him, if he really believes his own assertion, never thenceforward to use two words for the same thing. The fact is, truth and beauty are entirely distinct, though often related, things. One is a property of statements, the other of objects. The statement that "two and two make four" is true, but it is neither beautiful nor ugly, for it is invisible; a rose is lovely, but it is neither true nor false, for it is silent. That which shows nothing cannot be fair, and that which asserts nothing cannot be false. Even the ordinary use of the words

For instance, in any subject consisting of a number of figures, it will make as many of those figures beautiful as the faithful representation of humanity will admit. It will not deny the facts of ugliness or decrepitude, or relative inferiority or superiority of feature as necessarily manifested in a crowd, but it will, so far as it is in its power, seek for and dwell upon the fairest forms, and in all things insist on the beauty that is in them, not on the ugliness. In this respect, schools of art become higher in exact proportion to the degree in which they apprehend and love the beautiful. Thus, Angelico, intensely loving all spiritual beauty, will be of the highest rank; and Paul Veronese and Correggio, intensely loving physical and corporeal

false and true, as applied to artificial and real things, is inaccurate. An artificial rose is not a "false" rose, it is not a rose at all. The falseness is in the person who states, or induces the belief, that it *is* a rose.

Now, therefore, in things concerning art, the words true and false are only to be rightly used while the picture is considered as a statement of facts. The painter asserts that this which he has painted is the form of a dog, a man, or a tree. If it be *not* the form of a dog, a man, or a tree, the painter's statement is false; and, therefore, we justly speak of a false line, or false colour; not that any line or colour can in themselves be false, but they become so when they convey a statement that they resemble something which they do *not* resemble. But the beauty of the lines or colours is wholly independent of any such statement. They may be beautiful lines, though quite inaccurate, and ugly lines though quite faithful. A picture may be frightfully ugly, which represents with fidelity some base circumstance of daily life; and a painted window may be exquisitely beautiful, which represents men with eagles' faces, and dogs with blue heads and crimson tails (though, by the way, this is not in the strict sense *false* art, as we shall see hereafter, inasmuch as it means no assertion that men ever *had* eagles' faces). If this were not so, it would be impossible to sacrifice truth to beauty; for to attain the one would always be to attain the other. But, unfortunately, this sacrifice is exceedingly possible, and it is chiefly this which characterizes the false schools of high art, so far as high art consists in the pursuit of beauty. For although truth and beauty are independent of each other, it does not follow that we are at liberty to pursue whichever we please. They are indeed separable, but it is wrong to separate them; they are to be sought together in the order of their worthiness; that is to say, truth first, and beauty afterwards. High art differs from low art in possessing an excess of beauty in addition to its truth, not in possessing excess of beauty inconsistent with truth.

beauty, of the second rank; and Albert Dürer, Rubens, and in general the Northern artists, apparently insensible to beauty, and caring only for truth, whether shapely or not, of the third rank; and Teniers and Salvator, Caravaggio, and other such worshippers of the depraved, of no rank, or, as we said before, of a certain order in the abyss.....

III. SINCERITY. The next[1] characteristic of great art is that it includes the largest possible quantity of Truth in the most perfect possible harmony. If it were possible for art to give all the truths of nature, it ought to do it. But this is not possible. Choice must always be made of some facts which *can* be represented, from among others which must be passed by in silence, or even, in some respects, misrepresented. The inferior artist chooses unimportant and scattered truths; the great artist chooses the most necessary first, and afterwards the most consistent with these, so as to obtain the greatest possible and most harmonious *sum*. For instance, Rembrandt always chooses to represent the exact force with which the light on the most illumined part of an object is opposed to its obscurer portions. In order to obtain this, in most cases, not very important truth, he sacrifices the light and colour of five-sixths of his picture; and the expression of every character of objects which depends on tenderness of shape or tint. But he obtains his single truth, and what picturesque and forcible expression is dependent upon it, with magnificent skill and subtlety. Veronese, on the contrary, chooses to represent the great relations of visible things to each other, to the heaven above, and to the earth beneath them. He holds it more important to show how a figure stands relieved from delicate air, or marble wall; how as a red, or purple, or white figure, it separates itself, in clear discernibility, from things not red, nor purple, nor white; how infinite daylight shines round it; how innumerable veils of faint shadow invest it; how its blackness and darkness are, in the excess of their nature, just as limited and local as its intensity of light: all this, I say, he feels to be more

[1] I name them in order of *in*creasing, not decreasing importance.

important than showing merely the exact *measure* of the spark of sunshine that gleams on a dagger-hilt, or glows on a jewel. All this, moreover, he feels to be harmonious —capable of being joined in one great system of spacious truth. And with inevitable watchfulness, inestimable subtlety, he unites all this in tenderest balance, noting in each hair's-breadth of colour, not merely what its rightness or wrongness is in itself, but what its relation is to every other on his canvass; restraining, for truth's sake, his exhaustless energy, reining back, for truth's sake, his fiery strength; veiling, before truth, the vanity of brightness; penetrating, for truth, the discouragement of gloom; ruling his restless invention with a rod of iron; pardoning no error, no thoughtlessness, no forgetfulness; and subduing all his powers, impulses, and imaginations, to the arbitrament of a merciless justice, and the obedience of an incorruptible verity.

I give this instance with respect to colour and shade; but, in the whole field of art, the difference between the great and inferior artists is of the same kind, and may be determined at once by the question, which of them conveys the largest sum of truth?.....

IV. Invention. The last characteristic of great art is that it must be inventive, that is, be produced by the imagination. In this respect, it must precisely fulfil the definition already given of poetry; and not only present grounds for noble emotion, but furnish these grounds by *imaginative power*. Hence there is at once a great bar fixed between the two schools of Lower and Higher Art. The lower merely copies what is set before it, whether in portrait, landscape, or still-life; the higher either entirely imagines its subject, or arranges the materials presented to it, so as to manifest the imaginative power in all the three phases which have been already explained in the second volume.....

Such, then, being the characters required in order to constitute high art, if the reader will think over them a little, and over the various ways in which they may be falsely assumed, he will easily perceive how spacious and

dangerous a field of discussion they open to the ambitious critic, and of error to the ambitious artist; he will see how difficult it must be, either to distinguish what is truly great art from the mockeries of it, or to rank the real artists in anything like a progressive system of greater and less. For it will have been observed that the various qualities which form greatness are partly inconsistent with each other (as some virtues are, docility and firmness for instance), and partly independent of each other; and the fact is, that artists differ not more by mere capacity, than by the component *elements* of their capacity, each possessing in very different proportions the several attributes of greatness; so that, classed by one kind of merit, as, for instance, purity of expression, Angelico will stand highest; classed by another, sincerity of manner, Veronese will stand highest; classed by another, love of beauty, Leonardo will stand highest; and so on: hence arise continual disputes and misunderstandings among those who think that high art must always be one and the same, and that great artists ought to unite all great attributes in an equal degree.

In one of the exquisitely finished tales of Marmontel, a company of critics are received at dinner by the hero of the story, an old gentleman, somewhat vain of his *acquired* taste, and his niece, by whose incorrigible *natural* taste, he is seriously disturbed and tormented. During the entertainment, "On parcourut tous les genres de littérature, et pour donner plus d'essor à l'érudition et à la critique, on mit sur le tapis cette question toute neuve, sçavoir, lequel méritoit la préférence de Corneille ou de Racine. L'on disoit même là-dessus les plus belles choses du monde, lorsque la petite nièce, qui n'avoit pas dit un mot, s'avisa de demander naïvement lequel des deux fruits, de l'orange ou de la pêche, avoit le goût le plus exquis et méritoit le plus d'éloges. Son oncle rougit de sa simplicité, et les convives baissèrent tous les yeux sans daigner répondre à cette bêtise. Ma nièce, dit Fintac, à votre âge, il faut sçavoir écouter, et se taire."

I cannot close this chapter with shorter or better advice to the reader, than merely, whenever he hears discussions

about the relative merits of great masters, to remember the young lady's question. It is, indeed, true that there *is* a relative merit, that a peach is nobler than a hawthorn berry, and still more a hawthorn berry than a bead of the nightshade; but in each rank of fruits, as in each rank of masters, one is endowed with one virtue, and another with another; their glory is their dissimilarity, and they who propose to themselves in the training of an artist that he should unite the colouring of Tintoret, the finish of Albert Dürer, and the tenderness of Correggio, are no wiser than a horticulturist would be, who made it the object of his labour to produce a fruit which should unite in itself the lusciousness of the grape, the crispness of the nut, and the fragrance of the pine.

And from these considerations one most important practical corollary is to be deduced, with the good help of Mademoiselle Agathe's simile, namely, that the greatness or smallness of a man is, in the most conclusive sense, determined for him at his birth, as strictly as it is determined for a fruit whether it is to be a currant or an apricot. Education, favourable circumstances, resolution, and industry can do much; in a certain sense they do *everything;* that is to say, they determine whether the poor apricot shall fall in the form of a green bead, blighted by the east wind, and be trodden under foot, or whether it shall expand into tender pride, and sweet brightness of golden velvet. But apricot out of currant—great men out of small—did never yet art or effort make; and, in a general way, men have their excellence nearly fixed for them when they are born; a little cramped and frost-bitten on one side, a little sunburnt and fortune-spotted on the other, they reach, between good and evil chances, such size and taste as generally belong to the men of their calibre, and, the small in their serviceable bunches, the great in their golden isolation, have, these no cause for regret, nor those for disdain.

Therefore it is, that every system of teaching is false which holds forth "great art" as in any wise to be taught to students, or even to be aimed at by them. Great art is precisely that which never was, nor will be taught, it is

pre-eminently and finally the expression of the spirits of great men; so that the only wholesome teaching is that which simply endeavours to fix those characters of nobleness in the pupil's mind, of which it seems easily susceptible; and without holding out to him, as a possible or even probable result, that he should ever paint like Titian, or carve like Michael Angelo, enforces upon him the manifest possibility, and assured duty, of endeavouring to draw in a manner at least honest and intelligible; and cultivates in him those general charities of heart, sincerities of thought, and graces of habit which are likely to lead him, throughout life, to prefer openness to affectation, realities to shadows, and beauty to corruption.

31. Men's Proper Business.

THE pursuit, by the imagination, of beautiful and strange thoughts or subjects, to the exclusion of painful or common ones, is called among us, in these modern days, the pursuit of "*the ideal;*" nor does any subject deserve more attentive examination than the manner in which this pursuit is entered upon by the modern mind. The reader must pardon me for making in the outset one or two statements which may appear to him somewhat wide of the matter, but which (if he admits their truth) he will, I think, presently perceive to reach to the root of it. Namely,

That men's proper business in this world falls mainly into three divisions:

First, to know themselves, and the existing state of the things they have to do with.

Secondly, to be happy in themselves, and in the existing state of things.

Thirdly, to mend themselves, and the existing state of things, as far as either are marred and mendable.

These, I say, are the three plain divisions of proper human business on this earth. For these three, the following are usually substituted and adopted by human creatures:

First, to be totally ignorant of themselves, and the existing state of things.

Secondly, to be miserable in themselves, and in the existing state of things.

Thirdly, to let themselves, and the existing state of things, alone (at least, in the way of correction).

The dispositions which induce us to manage, thus wisely, the affairs of this life seem to be:

First, a fear of disagreeable facts, and conscious shrinking from clearness of light, which keep us from examining ourselves, and increase gradually into a species of instinctive terror at all truth, and love of glosses, veils, and decorative lies of every sort.

Secondly, a general readiness to take delight in anything past, future, far off, or somewhere else, rather than in things now, near, and here; leading us gradually to place our pleasure principally in the exercise of the imagination, and to build all our satisfaction on things as they are *not*. Which power being one not accorded to the lower animals, and having indeed, when disciplined, a very noble use, we pride ourselves upon it, whether disciplined or not, and pass our lives complacently, in substantial discontent, and visionary satisfaction.

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32. Purist Idealism.

PURIST Idealism results from the unwillingness of men whose dispositions are more than ordinarily tender and holy, to contemplate the various forms of definite evil which necessarily occur in the daily aspects of the world around them. They shrink from them as from pollution, and endeavour to create for themselves an imaginary state, in which pain and imperfection either do not exist, or exist in some edgeless and enfeebled condition.

As, however, pain and imperfection are, by eternal laws, bound up with existence, so far as it is visible to us, the endeavour to cast them away invariably indicates a comparative childishness of mind, and produces a childish form

of art. In general, the effort is most successful when it is most naïve, and when the ignorance of the draughtsman is in some frank proportion to his innocence. For instance, one of the modes of treatment, the most conducive to this ideal expression, is simply drawing everything without shadows, as if the sun were everywhere at once. This, in the present state of our knowledge, we could not do with grace, because we could not do it without fear or shame. But an artist of the thirteenth century did it with no disturbance of conscience—knowing no better, or rather, in some sense, we might say, knowing no worse. It is, however, evident, at the first thought, that all representations of nature without evil must either be ideals of a future world, or be false ideals, if they are understood to be representations of facts. They can only be classed among the branches of the true ideal, in so far as they are understood to be nothing more than expressions of the painter's personal affections or hopes.

Let us take one or two instances in order clearly to explain our meaning.

The life of Angelico was almost entirely spent in the endeavour to imagine the beings belonging to another world. By purity of life, habitual elevation of thought, and natural sweetness of disposition, he was enabled to express the sacred affections upon the human countenance as no one ever did before or since. In order to effect clearer distinction between heavenly beings and those of this world, he represents the former as clothed in draperies of the purest colour, crowned with glories of burnished gold, and entirely shadowless. With exquisite choice of gesture, and disposition of folds of drapery, this mode of treatment gives perhaps the best idea of spiritual beings which the human mind is capable of forming. It is, therefore, a true ideal; but the mode in which it is arrived at (being so far mechanical and contradictory of the appearances of nature) necessarily precludes those who practise it from being complete masters of their art. It is always childish, but beautiful in its childishness.

The works of our own Stothard are examples of the operation of another mind, singular in gentleness and purity, upon mere worldly subject. It seems as if Stothard could not

conceive wickedness, coarseness, or baseness; every one of his figures looks as if it had been copied from some creature who had never harboured an unkind thought, or permitted itself in an ignoble action. With this intense love of mental purity is joined, in Stothard, a love of mere physical smoothness and softness, so that he lived in a universe of soft grass and stainless fountains, tender trees, and stones at which no foot could stumble.

All this is very beautiful, and may sometimes urge us to an endeavour to make the world itself more like the conception of the painter. At least, in the midst of its malice, misery, and baseness, it is often a relief to glance at the graceful shadows, and take, for momentary companionship, creatures full only of love, gladness, and honour. But the perfect truth will at last vindicate itself against the partial truth; the help which we can gain from the unsubstantial vision will be only like that which we may sometimes receive, in weariness, from the scent of a flower or the passing of a breeze. For all firm aid, and steady use, we must look to harder realities; and, as far as the painter himself is regarded, we can only receive such work as the sign of an amiable imbecility. It is indeed ideal; but ideal as a fair dream is in the dawn of morning, before the faculties are astir. The apparent completeness of grace can never be attained without much definite falsification as well as omission; stones, over which we cannot stumble, must be ill-drawn stones; trees, which are all gentleness and softness, cannot be trees of wood; nor companies without evil in them, companies of flesh and blood. The habit of falsification (with whatever aim) begins always in dulness and ends always in incapacity: nothing can be more pitiable than any endeavour by Stothard to express facts beyond his own sphere of soft pathos or graceful mirth, and nothing more unwise than the aim at a similar ideality by any painter who has power to render a sincerer truth.

I remember another interesting example of ideality on this same root, but belonging to another branch of it, in the works of a young German painter, which I saw some time ago in a London drawing-room. He had been travelling in Italy, and had brought home a portfolio of sketches remarkable alike

for their fidelity and purity. Every one was a laborious and accurate study of some particular spot. Every cottage, every cliff, every tree, at the site chosen, had been drawn; and drawn with palpable sincerity of portraiture, and yet in such a spirit that it was impossible to conceive that any sin or misery had ever entered into one of the scenes he had represented; and the volcanic horrors of Radicofani, the pestilent gloom of the Pontines, and the boundless despondency of the Campagna became, under his hand, only various appearances of Paradise.

It was very interesting to observe the minute emendations or omissions by which this was effected. To set the tiles the slightest degree more in order upon a cottage roof; to insist upon the vine-leaves at the window, and let the shadow which fell from them naturally conceal the rent in the wall; to draw all the flowers in the foreground, and miss the weeds; to draw all the folds of the white clouds, and miss those of the black ones; to mark the graceful branches of the trees, and, in one way or another, beguile the eye from those which were ungainly; to give every peasant-girl whose face was visible the expression of an angel, and every one whose back was turned the bearing of a princess; finally, to give a general look of light, clear organization and serene vitality to every feature in the landscape; such were his artifices, and such his delights. It was impossible not to sympathize deeply with the spirit of such a painter; and it was just cause for gratitude to be permitted to travel, as it were, through Italy with such a friend. But his work had, nevertheless, its stern limitations and marks of everlasting inferiority. Always soothing and pathetic, it could never be sublime, never perfectly nor entrancingly beautiful; for the narrow spirit of correction could not cast itself fully into any scene; the calm cheerfulness which shrank from the shadow of the cypress, and the distortion of the olive, could not enter into the brightness of the sky that they pierced, nor the softness of the bloom that they bore: for every sorrow that his heart turned from, he lost a consolation; for every fear which he dared not confront, he lost a portion of his hardiness; the unsceptred sweep of the storm-clouds, the

fair freedom of glancing shower and flickering sunbeam, sank into sweet rectitudes and decent formalisms; and, before eyes that refused to be dazzled or darkened, the hours of sunset wreathed their rays unheeded, and the mists of the Apennines spread their blue veils in vain.

To this inherent shortcoming and narrowness of reach the farther defect was added, that this work gave no useful representation of the state of facts in the country which it pretended to contemplate. It was not only wanting in all the higher elements of beauty, but wholly unavailable for instruction of any kind beyond that which exists in pleasurableness of pure emotion. And considering what cost of labour was devoted to the series of drawings, it could not but be matter for grave blame, as well as for partial contempt, that a man of amiable feeling and considerable intellectual power should thus expend his life in the declaration of his own petty pieties and pleasant reveries, leaving the burden of human sorrow unwitnessed, and the power of God's judgments unconfessed; and, while poor Italy lay wounded and moaning at his feet, pass by, in priestly calm, lest the whiteness of his decent vesture should be spotted with unhallowed blood.

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33. Finish.

THERE are two great and separate senses in which we call a thing finished, or well-finished. One, which refers to the mere neatness and completeness of the actual work, as we speak of a well-finished knife-handle or ivory toy (as opposed to ill-cut ones); and, secondly, a sense which refers to the effect produced by the thing done, as we call a picture well-finished if it is so full in its details, as to produce the effect of reality on the spectator. And, in England, we seem at present to value highly the first sort of finish which belongs to work*manship*, in our manufactures and general doings of any kind, but to despise totally the impressive finish which belongs to the *work;* and therefore we like smooth ivories better than rough ones—but careless scrawls or daubs better

than the most complete paintings. Now, I believe that we exactly reverse the fitness of judgment in this matter, and that we ought, on the contrary, to despise the finish of work*manship*, which is done for vanity's sake, and to love the finish of *work*, which is done for truth's sake—that we ought, in a word, to finish our ivory toys more roughly, and our pictures more delicately.

Let us think over this matter.

Perhaps one of the most remarkable points of difference between the English and Continental nations is in the degree of finish given to their ordinary work. It is enough to cross from Dover to Calais to feel this difference; and to travel farther only increases the sense of it. English windows for the most part fit their sashes, and their woodwork is neatly planed and smoothed: French windows are larger, heavier, and framed with wood that looks as if it had been cut to its shape with a hatchet; they have curious and cumbrous fastenings, and can only be forced asunder or together by some ingenuity and effort, and even then not properly. So with everything else—French, Italian, and German, and, as far as I know, Continental. Foreign drawers do not slide as well as ours; foreign knives do not cut so well; foreign wheels do not turn so well; and we commonly plume ourselves much upon this, believing that generally the English people do their work better and more thoroughly, or as they say, "turn it out of their hands in better style," than foreigners. I do not know how far this is really the case. There may be a flimsy neatness, as well as a substantial roughness; it does not necessarily follow that the window which shuts easiest will last the longest, or that the harness which glitters the most is assuredly made of the toughest leather. I am afraid, that if this peculiar character of finish in our workmanship ever arose from a greater heartiness and thoroughness in our ways of doing things, it does so only now in the case of our best manufacturers; and that a great deal of the work done in England, however good in appearance, is but treacherous and rotten in substance. Still, I think that there is really in the English mind, for the most part, a stronger desire to do things as well as they can be done, and less inclination

to put up with inferiorities or insufficiencies, than in general characterize the temper of foreigners. There is in this conclusion no ground for national vanity; for though the desire to do things as well as they can be done at first appears like a virtue, it is certainly not so in all its forms. On the contrary, it proceeds in nine cases out of ten more from vanity than conscientiousness; and that, moreover, often a weak vanity. I suppose that as much finish is displayed in the fittings of the private carriages of our young rich men as in any other department of English manufacture; and that our St. James's Street cabs, dogcarts, and liveries are singularly perfect in their way. But the feeling with which this perfection is insisted upon (however desirable as a sign of energy of purpose) is not in itself a peculiarly amiable or noble feeling; neither is it an ignoble disposition which would induce a country gentleman to put up with certain deficiencies in the appearance of his country-made carriage. It is true that such philosophy may degenerate into negligence, and that much thought and long discussion would be needed before we could determine satisfactorily the limiting lines between virtuous contentment and faultful carelessness; but at all events we have no right at once to pronounce ourselves the wisest people because we like to do all things in the best way. There are many little things which to do admirably is to waste both time and cost; and the real question is not so much whether we have done a given thing as well as possible, as whether we have turned a given quantity of labour to the best account.

Now, so far from the labour's being turned to good account which is given to our English "finishing," I believe it to be usually destructive of the best powers of our workmen's minds. For it is evident, in the first place, that there is almost always a useful and a useless finish; the hammering and welding which are necessary to produce a sword blade of the best quality, are useful finishing; the polish of its surface, useless.[1] In nearly all work this distinction will,

[1] With his Yemen sword for aid;
Ornament it carried none,
But the notches on the blade.

more or less, take place between substantial finish and apparent finish, or what may be briefly characterized as "Make" and "Polish." And so far as finish is bestowed for purposes of "make," I have nothing to say against it. Even the vanity which displays itself in giving strength to our work is rather a virtue than a vice. But so far as finish is bestowed for purposes of "polish," there is much to be said against it; this first, and very strongly, that the qualities aimed at in common finishing, namely, smoothness, delicacy, or fineness, *cannot* in reality *exist*, in a degree worth admiring, in anything done by human hands. Our best finishing is but coarse and blundering work after all. We may smooth and soften, and sharpen till we are sick at heart; but take a good magnifying-glass to our miracle of skill, and the invisible edge is a jagged saw, and the silky thread a rugged cable, and the soft surface a granite desert. Let all the ingenuity and all the art of the human race be brought to bear upon the attainment of the utmost possible finish, and they could not do what is done in the foot of a fly, or the film of a bubble. God alone can finish; and the more intelligent the human mind becomes, the more the infiniteness of interval is felt between human and divine work in this respect. So then it is not a little absurd to weary ourselves in struggling towards a point which we never can reach, and to exhaust our strength in vain endeavours to produce qualities which exist inimitably and inexhaustibly in the commonest things around us.

But more than this: the fact is, that in multitudes of instances, instead of gaining greater fineness of finish by our work, we are only destroying the fine finish of Nature, and substituting coarseness and imperfection. For instance, when a rock of any kind has lain for some time exposed to the weather, Nature finishes it in her own way; first, she takes wonderful pains about its forms, sculpturing it into exquisite variety of dint and dimple, and rounding or hollowing it into contours, which for fineness no human hand can follow; then she colours it; and every one of her touches of colour, instead of being a powder mixed with oil, is a minute forest of living trees, glorious in strength and

beauty, and concealing wonders of structure, which in all probability are mysteries even to the eyes of angels. Man comes, and digs up this finished and marvellous piece of work, which in his ignorance he calls a "rough stone." He proceeds to finish it in *his* fashion, that is, to split it in two, rend it into ragged blocks, and, finally, to chisel its surface into a large number of lumps and knobs, all equally shapeless, colourless, deathful, and frightful.[1] And the block, thus disfigured, he calls "finished," and proceeds to build therewith, and thinks himself great, forsooth, and an intelligent animal. Whereas, all that he has really done is, to destroy with utter ravage a piece of divine art, which, under the laws appointed by the Deity to regulate His work in this world, it must take good twenty years to produce the like of again. This he has destroyed, and has himself given in its place a piece of work which needs no more intelligence to do than a pholas has, or a worm, or the spirit which throughout the world has authority over rending, rottenness, and decay. I do not say that stone must not be cut; it needs to be cut for certain uses; only I say that the cutting it is not "finishing," but *un*finishing, it; and that so far as the mere fact of chiselling goes, the stone is ruined by the human touch. It is with it as with the stones of the Jewish altar: "If thou lift up thy tool upon it, thou hast polluted it." In like manner, a tree is a finished thing. But a plank, though ever so polished, is not. We need stones and planks, as we need food; but we no more bestow an additional admirableness upon stone in hewing it, or upon a tree in sawing it, than upon an animal in killing it.

Well, but it will be said, there is certainly a kind of finish in stone-cutting, and in every other art, which *is* meritorious, and which consists in smoothing and refining as much as possible. Yes, assuredly there is a meritorious finish. First, as it has just been said, that which fits a thing for its uses—as a stone to lie well in its place, or a cog of an engine-wheel to play well on another; and, secondly, a finish belonging properly to the arts; but *that* finish does not consist in smoothing or polishing, but in the *completeness of the expres-*

[1] See the base of the new Army and Navy Clubhouse.

sion of ideas. For in painting, there is precisely the same difference between the ends proposed in finishing that there is in manufacture. Some artists finish for the finish sake; dot their pictures all over, as in some kinds of miniature-painting (when a wash of colour would have produced as good an effect); or polish their pictures all over, making the execution so delicate that the touch of the brush cannot be seen, for the sake of the smoothness merely, and of the credit they may thus get for great labour; which kind of execution, seen in great perfection in many works of the Dutch school, and in those of Carlo Dolce, is that polished "language" against which I have already spoken at length; nor is it possible to speak of it with too great severity or contempt, where it has been made an ultimate end.

But other artists finish for the impression's sake, not to show their skill, nor to produce a smooth piece of work, but that they may, with each stroke, render clearer the expression of knowledge. And this sort of finish is not, properly speaking, so much *completing* the picture as *adding* to it. It is not that what is painted is more delicately done, but that infinitely *more* is painted. This finish is always noble, and, like all other noblest things, hardly ever understood or appreciated.

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34. The Use of Pictures.

Not long ago, as I was leaving one of the towns of Switzerland, early in the morning, I saw in the clouds behind the houses an Alp which I did not know, a grander Alp than any I knew, nobler than the Schreckhorn or the Mönch; terminated, as it seemed, on one side by a precipice of almost unimaginable height; on the other, sloping away for leagues in one field of lustrous ice, clear and fair and blue, flashing here and there into silver under the morning sun. For a moment I received a sensation of as much sublimity as any natural object could possibly excite; the next moment, I saw that my unknown Alp was the glass roof of one of the workshops of the town, rising above its

nearer houses, and rendered aërial and indistinct by some pure blue wood smoke which rose from intervening chimneys.

It is evident, that so far as the mere delight of the eye was concerned, the glass roof was here equal, or at least equal for a moment, to the Alp. Whether the power of the object over the heart was to be small or great, depended altogether upon what it was understood for, upon its being taken possession of and apprehended in its full nature, either as a granite mountain or a group of panes of glass; and thus, always, the real majesty of the appearance of the thing to us, depends upon the degree in which we ourselves possess the power of understanding it—that penetrating, possession-taking power of the imagination, which has been long ago defined [1] as the very life of the man, considered as a *seeing* creature. For though the casement had indeed been an Alp, there are many persons on whose minds it would have produced no more effect than the glass roof. It would have been to them a glittering object of a certain apparent length and breadth, and whether of glass or ice, whether twenty feet in length, or twenty leagues, would have made no difference to them; or, rather, would not have been in any wise conceived or considered by them. Examine the nature of your own emotion (if you feel it) at the sight of the Alp, and you find all the brightness of that emotion hanging, like dew on gossamer, on a curious web of subtle fancy and imperfect knowledge. First, you have a vague idea of its size, coupled with wonder at the work of the great Builder of its walls and foundations, then an apprehension of its eternity, a pathetic sense of its perpetualness, and your own transientness, as of the grass upon its sides; then, and in this very sadness, a sense of strange companionship with past generations in seeing what they saw. They did not see the clouds that are floating over your head; nor the cottage wall on the other side of the field; nor the road by which you are travelling. But they saw *that*. The wall of granite in the heavens was the same to them as to you. They have ceased to look upon it; you will soon cease to look

[1] Vol. II. Chapter on "Penetrative Imagination."

also, and the granite wall will be for others. Then, mingled with these more solemn imaginations, come the understandings of the gifts and glories of the Alps, the fancying forth of all the fountains that well from its rocky walls, and strong rivers that are born out of its ice, and of all the pleasant valleys that wind between its cliffs, and all the châlets that gleam among its clouds, and happy farmsteads couched upon its pastures; while together with the thoughts of these, rise strange sympathies with all the unknown of human life, and happiness, and death, signified by that narrow white flame of the everlasting snow, seen so far in the morning sky.

These images, and far more than these, lie at the root of the emotion which you feel at the sight of the Alp. You may not trace them in your heart, for there is a great deal more in your heart, of evil and good, than you ever can trace; but they stir you and quicken you for all that. Assuredly, so far as you feel more at beholding the snowy mountain than any other object of the same sweet silvery grey, these are the kind of images which cause you to do so; and, observe, these are nothing more than a greater apprehension of the *facts* of the thing. We call the power "Imagination," because it imagines or conceives; but it is only noble imagination if it imagines or conceives *the truth*. And, according to the degree of knowledge possessed, and of sensibility to the pathetic or impressive character of the things known, will be the degree of this imaginative delight.

But the main point to be noted at present is, that if the imagination can be excited to this its peculiar work, it matters comparatively little what it is excited by. If the smoke had not cleared partially away, the glass roof might have pleased me as well as an Alp, until I had quite lost sight of it; and if, in a picture, the imagination can be once caught, and, without absolute affront from some glaring fallacy, set to work in its own field, the imperfection of the historical details themselves is, to the spectator's enjoyment, of small consequence.

Hence it is, that poets, and men of strong feeling in general, are apt to be among the very worst judges of painting. The slightest hint is enough for them. Tell them

that a white stroke means a ship, and a black stain, a thunderstorm, and they will be perfectly satisfied with both, and immediately proceed to remember all that they ever felt about ships and thunderstorms, attributing the whole current and fulness of their own feelings to the painter's work; while probably, if the picture be really good, full of stern fact, the poet, or man of feeling, will find some of its fact *in his way*, out of the particular course of his own thoughts—be offended at it, take to criticizing and wondering at it, detect, at last, some imperfection in it—such as must be inherent in all human work—and so finally quarrel with, and reject the whole thing. Thus, Wordsworth writes many sonnets to Sir George Beaumont and Haydon, none to Sir Joshua or to Turner.

Hence, also the error into which many superficial artists fall, in speaking of "addressing the imagination" as the only end of art. It is quite true that the imagination must be addressed; but it may be very sufficiently addressed by the stain left by an ink-bottle thrown at the wall. The thrower has little credit, though an imaginative observer may find, perhaps, more to amuse him in the erratic nigrescence than in many a laboured picture. And thus, in a slovenly or ill-finished picture, it is no credit to the artist that he has "addressed the imagination;" nor is the success of such an appeal any criterion whatever of the merit of the work. The duty of an artist is not only to address and awaken, but to *guide* the imagination; and there is no safe guidance but that of simple concurrence with fact. It is no matter that the picture takes the fancy of A or B, that C writes sonnets to it, and D feels it to be divine. This is still the only question for the artist, or for us: "Is it a fact? Are things really so?" "Is the picture an Alp among pictures, full, firm, eternal; or only a glass house, frail, hollow, contemptible, demolishable; calling, at all honest hands, for detection and demolition?"

Hence it is also that so much grievous difficulty stands in the way of obtaining *real opinion* about pictures at all. Tell any man, of the slightest imaginative power, that such and such a picture is good, and means this or that: tell him,

for instance, that a Claude is good, and that it means trees, and grass, and water; and forthwith, whatever faith, virtue, humility, and imagination there are in the man, rise up to help Claude, and to declare that indeed it is all "excellent good, i' faith;" and whatever in the course of his life he has felt of pleasure in trees and grass, he will begin to reflect upon and enjoy anew, supposing all the while it is the picture he is enjoying. Hence, when once a painter's reputation is accredited, it must be a stubborn kind of person indeed whom he will not please, or seem to please; for all the vain and weak people pretend to be pleased with him, for their own credit's sake, and all the humble and imaginative people seriously and honestly fancy they *are* pleased with him, deriving indeed, very certainly, delight from his work, but a delight which, if they were kept in the same temper, they would equally derive (and, indeed, constantly do derive) from the grossest daub that can be manufactured in imitation by the pawnbroker. Is, therefore, the pawnbroker's imitation as good as the original? Not so. There is the certain test of goodness and badness, which I am always striving to get people to use. As long as they are satisfied if they find their feelings pleasantly stirred and their fancy gaily occupied, so long there is for them no good, no bad. Anything may please, or anything displease, them; and their entire manner of thought and talking about art is mockery, and all their judgments are laborious injustices. But let them, in the teeth of their pleasure or displeasure, simply put the calm question, Is it so? Is that the way a stone is shaped, the way a cloud is wreathed, the way a leaf is veined? and they are safe. They will do no more injustice to themselves nor to other men; they will learn to whose guidance they may trust their imagination, and from whom they must for ever withhold its reins.

"Well, but why have you dragged in this poor spectator's imagination at all, if you have nothing more to say for it than this; if you are merely going to abuse it, and go back to your tiresome facts?"

Nay; I am not going to abuse it. On the contrary, I have to assert, in a temper profoundly venerant of it, that

though we must not suppose everything is right when this is aroused, we may be sure that something is wrong when this is *not* aroused. The something wrong may be in the spectator or in the picture; and if the picture be demonstrably in accordance with truth, the odds are, that it is in the spectator; but there is wrong somewhere; for the work of the picture is indeed eminently to get at this imaginative power in the beholder, and all its facts are of no use whatever if it does not. No matter how much truth it tells if the hearer be asleep. Its first work is to wake him, then to teach him.

Now, observe, while, as it penetrates into the nature of things, the imagination is pre-eminently a beholder of things *as* they *are*, it is, in its creative function, an eminent beholder of things *when* and *where* they are NOT; a seer, that is, in the prophetic sense, calling "the things that are not as though they were," and for ever delighting to dwell on that which is not tangibly present. And its great function being the calling forth, or back, that which is not visible to bodily sense, it has of course been made to take delight in the fulfilment of its proper function, and pre-eminently to enjoy, and spend its energy on, things past and future, or out of sight, rather than things present, or in sight. So that if the imagination is to be called to take delight in any object, it will not be always well, if we can help it, to put the *real* object there, before it. The imagination would on the whole rather have it *not* there; the reality and substance are rather in the imagination's way; it would think a good deal more of the thing if it could not see it. Hence, that strange and sometimes fatal charm, which there is in all things as long as we wait for them, and the moment we have lost them; but which fades while we possess them; that sweet bloom of all that is far away, which perishes under our touch. Yet the feeling of this is not a weakness; it is one of the most glorious gifts of the human mind, making the whole infinite future, and imperishable past, a richer inheritance, if faithfully inherited, than the changeful, frail, fleeting present; it is also one of the many witnesses in us to the truth that these present and tangible things are not meant to

satisfy us. The instinct becomes a weakness only when it is weakly indulged, and when the faculty which was intended by God to give back to us what we have lost, and gild for us what is to come, is so perverted as only to darken what we possess. But, perverted or pure, the instinct itself is everlasting, and the substantial presence even of the things which we love the best, will inevitably and for ever be found wanting in *one* strange and tender charm, which belonged to the dreams of them.

Another character of the imagination is equally constant, and, to our present inquiry, of yet greater importance. It is eminently a *weariable* faculty, eminently delicate, and incapable of bearing fatigue; so that if we give it too many objects at a time to employ itself upon, or very grand ones for a long time together, it fails under the effort, becomes jaded, exactly as the limbs do by bodily fatigue, and incapable of answering any farther appeal till it has had rest. And this is the real nature of the weariness which is so often felt in travelling, from seeing too much. It is not that the monotony and number of the beautiful things seen have made them valueless, but that the imaginative power has been overtaxed; and, instead of letting it rest, the traveller, wondering to find himself dull, and incapable of admiration, seeks for something more admirable, excites and torments, and drags the poor fainting imagination up by the shoulders: "Look at this, and look at that, and this more wonderful still!" — until the imaginative faculty faints utterly away, beyond all farther torment, or pleasure, dead for many a day to come; and the despairing prodigal takes to horse-racing in the Campagna, good now for nothing else than that; whereas, if the imagination had only been laid down on the grass, among simple things, and left quiet for a little while, it would have come to itself gradually, recovered its strength and colour, and soon been fit for work again. So that, whenever the imagination is tired, it is necessary to find for it something, not *more* admirable but *less* admirable; such as in that weak state it can deal with; then give it peace, and it will recover.

I well recollect the walk on which I first found out this;

it was on the winding road from Sallenche, sloping up the hills towards St. Gervais, one cloudless Sunday afternoon. The road circles softly between bits of rocky bank and mounded pasture; little cottages and chapels gleaming out from among the trees at every turn. Behind me, some leagues in length, rose the jagged range of the mountains of the Réposoir; on the other side of the valley, the mass of the Aiguille de Varens, heaving its seven thousand feet of cliff into the air at a single effort, its gentle gift of waterfall, the Nant d'Arpenaz, like a pillar of cloud at its feet; Mont Blanc and all its aiguilles, one silver flame, in front of me; marvellous blocks of mossy granite and dark glades of pine around me; but I could enjoy nothing, and could not for a long while make out what was the matter with me, until at last I discovered that if I confined myself to one thing—and that a little thing—a tuft of moss, or a single crag at the top of the Varens, or a wreath or two of foam at the bottom of the Nant d'Arpenaz, I began to enjoy it directly, because then I had mind enough to put into the thing, and the enjoyment arose from the quantity of the imaginative energy I could bring to bear upon it; but when I looked at or thought of all together, moss, stones, Varens, Nant d'Arpenaz, and Mont Blanc, I had not mind enough to give to all, and none were of any value. The conclusion which would have been formed, upon this, by a German philosopher, would have been that the Mont Blanc *was* of no value; that he and his imagination only were of value; that the Mont Blanc, in fact, except so far as he was able to look at it, could not be considered as having any existence. But the only conclusion which occurred to me as reasonable under the circumstances (I have seen no ground for altering it since) was, that I was an exceedingly small creature, much tired, and, at the moment, not a little stupid, for whom a blade of grass, or a wreath of foam, was quite food enough and to spare, and that if I tried to take any more, I should make myself ill. Whereupon, associating myself fraternally with some ants, who were deeply interested in the conveyance of some small sticks over the road, and rather, as I think they generally are, in too great a hurry about it, I returned home in a little

while with great contentment, thinking how well it was ordered that, as Mont Blanc and his pine forests could not be everywhere, nor all the world come to see them, the human mind, on the whole, should enjoy itself most surely in an ant-like manner, and be happy and busy with the bits of stick and grains of crystal that fall in its way to be handled, in daily duty.

It follows evidently from the first of these characters of the imagination, its dislike of substance and presence, that a picture has in some measure even an advantage with us in not being real. The imagination rejoices in having something to do, springs up with all its willing power, flattered and happy; and ready with its fairest colours and most tender pencilling, to prove itself worthy of the trust, and exalt into sweet supremacy the shadow that has been confided to its fondness. And thus, so far from its being at all an object to the painter to make his work look real, he ought to dread such a consummation as the loss of one of its most precious claims upon the heart. So far from striving to convince the beholder that what he sees is substance, his mind should be to what he paints as the fire to the body on the pile, burning away the ashes, leaving the unconquerable shade—an immortal dream. So certain is this, that the slightest local success in giving the deceptive appearance of reality—the imitation, for instance, of the texture of a bit of wood, with its grain in relief—will instantly destroy the charm of a whole picture; the imagination feels itself insulted and injured, and passes by with cold contempt; nay, however beautiful the whole scene may be, as of late in much of our highly wrought painting for the stage, the mere fact of its being deceptively real is enough to make us tire of it; we may be surprised and pleased for a moment, but the imagination will not on those terms be persuaded to give any of its help, and, in a quarter of an hour, we wish the scene would change.

"Well, but then, what becomes of all these long dogmatic chapters of yours about giving nothing but the truth, and as much truth as possible?"

The chapters are all quite right. "Nothing but the

Truth," I say still. "As much Truth as possible," I say still. But truth so presented, that it will need the help of the imagination to make it real. Between the painter and the beholder, each doing his proper part, the reality should be sustained; and after the beholding imagination has come forward and done its best, then, with its help and in the full action of it, the beholder should be able to say, I feel as if I were at the real place, or seeing the real incident. But not without that help.

Farther, in consequence of that other character of the imagination, fatiguableness, it is a great advantage to the picture that it need not present too much at once, and that what it does present may be so chosen and ordered as not only to be more easily seized, but to give the imagination rest, and, as it were, places to lie down and stretch its limbs in; kindly vacancies, beguiling it back into action, with pleasant and cautious sequence of incident; all jarring thoughts being excluded, all vain redundance denied, and all just and sweet transition permitted.

And thus it is that, for the most part, imperfect sketches, engravings, outlines, rude sculptures, and other forms of abstraction, possess a charm which the most finished picture frequently wants. For not only does the finished picture excite the imagination less, but, like nature itself, it *taxes* it more. None of it can be enjoyed till the imagination is brought to bear upon it; and the details of the completed picture are so numerous, that it needs greater strength and willingness in the beholder to follow them all out; the redundance, perhaps, being not too great for the mind of a careful observer, but too great for a casual or careless observer. So that although the perfection of art will always consist in the utmost *acceptable* completion, yet, as every added idea will increase the difficulty of apprehension, and every added touch advance the dangerous realism which makes the imagination languid, the difference between a noble and ignoble painter is in nothing more sharply defined than in this—that the first wishes to put into his work as much truth as possible, and yet to keep it looking *un*-real; the second wishes to get through his work lazily, with as

little truth as possible, and yet to make it look real; and, so far as they add colour to their abstract sketch, the first realizes for the sake of the colour, and the second colours for the sake of the realization.[1]

And then, lastly, it is another infinite advantage possessed by the picture, that in these various differences from reality it becomes the expression of the power and intelligence of a companionable human soul. In all this choice, arrangement, penetrative sight, and kindly guidance, we recognize a supernatural operation, and perceive, not merely the landscape or incident as in a mirror, but, besides, the presence of what, after all, may perhaps be the most wonderful piece of divine work in the whole matter—the great human spirit through which it is manifested to us. So that, although with respect to many important scenes, it might, as we saw above, be one of the most precious gifts that could be given us to see them with *our own eyes*, yet also in many things it is more desirable to be permitted to see them with the eyes of others; and although, to the small, conceited, and affected painter displaying his narrow knowledge and tiny dexterities, our only word may be, "Stand aside from between that nature and me:" yet to the great imaginative painter—greater a million times in every faculty of soul than we—our word may wisely be, "Come between this nature and me—this nature which is too great and too wonderful for me; temper it for me, interpret it to me; let me see with your eyes, and hear with your ears, and have help and strength from your great spirit."

All the noblest pictures have this character. They are true or inspired ideals, seen in a moment to *be* ideal; that is to say, the result of all the highest powers of the imagination, engaged in the discovery and apprehension of the purest truths, and having so arranged them as best to show their preciousness and exalt their clearness. They are always orderly, always one, ruled by one great purpose throughout, in the fulfilment of which every atom of the detail is called to help, and would be missed if removed; this peculiar one-

[1] Several other points connected with this subject have already been noticed in the last chapter of the *Stones of Venice*, § 21, &c.

ness being the result, not of obedience to any teachable law, but of the magnificence of tone in the perfect mind, which accepts only what is good for its great purposes, rejects whatever is foreign or redundant, and instinctively and instantaneously ranges whatever it accepts, in sublime subordination and helpful brotherhood.

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35. The Greek Notion of a God.

I DO not think we ever enough endeavour to enter into what a Greek's real notion of a god was. We are so accustomed to the modern mockeries of the classical religion, so accustomed to hear and see the Greek gods introduced as living personages, or invoked for help, by men who believe neither in them nor in any other gods, that we seem to have infected the Greek ages themselves with the breath, and dimmed them with the shade, of our hypocrisy; and are apt to think that Homer, as we know that Pope, was merely an ingenious fabulist; nay, more than this, that all the nations of past time were ingenious fabulists also, to whom the universe was a lyrical drama, and by whom whatsoever was said about it was merely a witty allegory, or a graceful lie, of which the entire upshot and consummation was a pretty statue in the middle of the court, or at the end of the garden.

This, at least, is one of our forms of opinion about Greek faith; not, indeed, possible altogether to any man of honesty or ordinary powers of thought; but still so venomously inherent in the modern philosophy that all the pure lightning of Carlyle cannot as yet quite burn it out of any of us. And then, side by side with this mere infidel folly, stands the bitter short-sightedness of Puritanism, holding the classical god to be either simply an idol—a block of stone ignorantly, though sincerely, worshipped—or else an actual diabolic or betraying power, usurping the place of God.

Both these Puritanical estimates of Greek deity are of course to some extent true. The corruption of classical worship is barren idolatry; and that corruption was deepened,

and variously directed to their own purposes, by the evil angels. But this was neither the whole, nor the principal part, of Pagan worship. Pallas was not, in the pure Greek mind, merely a powerful piece of ivory in a temple at Athens; neither was the choice of Leonidas between the alternatives granted him by the oracle, of personal death, or ruin to his country, altogether a work of the Devil's prompting.

What, then, was actually the Greek god? In what way were these two ideas of human form, and divine power, credibly associated in the ancient heart, so as to become a subject of true faith, irrespective equally of fable, allegory, superstitious trust in stone, and demoniacal influence?

It seems to me that the Greek had exactly the same instinctive feeling about the elements that we have ourselves; that to Homer, as much as to Casimir de la Vigne, fire seemed ravenous and pitiless; to Homer, as much as to Keats, the sea-wave appeared wayward or idle, or whatever else it may be to the poetical passion. But then the Greek reasoned upon the sensation, saying to himself: "I can light the fire, and put it out; I can dry this water up, or drink it. It cannot be the fire or the water that rages, or that is wayward. But it must be something *in* this fire and *in* the water, which I cannot destroy by extinguishing the one, or evaporating the other, any more than I destroy myself by cutting off my finger; *I* was *in* my finger—something of me at least was; I had a power over it, and felt pain in it, though I am still as much myself when it is gone. So there may be a power in the water which is not water, but to which the water is as a body;—which can strike with it, move in it, suffer in it, yet not be destroyed with it. This something, this great Water Spirit, I must not confuse with the waves, which are only its body. *They* may flow hither and thither, increase or diminish. *That* must be indivisible—imperishable—a god. So of fire also; those rays which I can stop, and in the midst of which I cast a shadow, cannot be divine, nor greater than I. They cannot feel, but there may be something in them that feels—a glorious intelligence, as much nobler and more swift than mine, as these rays, which

are its body, are nobler and swifter than my flesh;—the spirit of all light, and truth, and melody, and revolving hours."

It was easy to conceive, farther, that such spirits should be able to assume at will a human form, in order to hold intercourse with men, or to perform any act for which their proper body, whether of fire, earth, or air, was unfitted. And it would have been to place them beneath, instead of above, humanity, if, assuming the form of man, they could not also have tasted his pleasures. Hence the easy step to the more or less material ideas of deities, which are apt at first to shock us, but which are indeed only dishonourable so far as they represent the gods as false and unholy. It is not the materialism, but the vice, which degrades the conception; for the materialism itself is never positive or complete. There is always some sense of exaltation in the spiritual and immortal body; and of a power proceeding from the visible form through all the infinity of the element ruled by the particular god. The precise nature of the idea is well seen in the passage of the *Iliad* which describes the river Scamander defending the Trojans against Achilles. In order to remonstrate with the hero, the god assumes a human form, which nevertheless is in some way or other instantly recognized by Achilles as that of the river-god: it is addressed at once as a river, not as a man; and its voice is the voice of a river, "out of the deep whirlpools."[1] Achilles refuses to obey its commands; and from the human form it returns instantly into its natural or divine one, and endeavours to overwhelm him with waves. Vulcan defends Achilles, and sends fire against the river, which suffers in its water-body, till it is able to bear no more. At last even the "nerve of the river," or "strength of the river" (note the expression), feels the fire, and this "strength of the river" addresses Vulcan in supplications for respite. There is in this precisely the idea of a vital part of the river-body, which acted and felt, and which, if the fire reached, it was death, just as

[1] Compare *Lay of the Last Minstrel*, canto i., stanza 15, and canto v., stanza 2. In the first instance, the river-spirit is accurately the Homeric god, only Homer would have believed in it—Scott did not; at least altogether.

would be the case if it touched a vital part of the human body. Throughout the passage the manner of conception is perfectly clear and consistent; and if, in other places, the exact connection between the ruling spirit and the thing ruled is not so manifest, it is only because it is almost impossible for the human mind to dwell long upon such subjects without falling into inconsistencies, and gradually slackening its effort to grasp the entire truth; until the more spiritual part of it slips from its hold, and only the human form of the god is left, to be conceived and described as subject to all the errors of humanity. But I do not believe that the idea ever weakens itself down to mere allegory. When Pallas is said to attack and strike down Mars, it does not mean merely that Wisdom at that moment prevailed against Wrath. It means that there are indeed two great spirits, one entrusted to guide the human soul to wisdom and chastity, the other to kindle wrath and prompt to battle. It means that these two spirits, on the spot where, and at the moment when, a great contest was to be decided between all that they each governed in man, then and there assumed human form, and human weapons, and did verily and materially strike at each other, until the Spirit of Wrath was crushed. And when Diana is said to hunt with her nymphs in the woods, it does not mean merely, as Wordsworth puts it, that the poet or shepherd saw the moon and stars glancing between the branches of the trees, and wished to say so figuratively. It means that there is a living spirit, to which the light of the moon is a body; which takes delight in glancing between the clouds and following the wild beasts as they wander through the night; and that this spirit sometimes assumes a perfect human form, and in this form, with real arrows, pursues and slays the wild beasts, which with its mere arrows of moonlight it could not slay; retaining, nevertheless, all the while, its power and being in the moonlight, and in all else that it rules.

There is not the smallest inconsistency or unspirituality in this conception. If there were, it would attach equally to the appearance of the angels to Jacob, Abraham, Joshua, or Manoah. In all those instances the highest authority which

governs our own faith requires us to conceive divine power clothed with a human form (a form so real that it is recognized for superhuman only by its "doing wondrously"), and retaining, nevertheless, sovereignty and omnipresence in all the world. This is precisely, as I understand it, the heathen idea of a God; and it is impossible to comprehend any single part of the Greek mind until we grasp this faithfully, not endeavouring to explain it away in any wise, but accepting, with frank decision and definition, the tangible existence of its deities;—blue-eyed—white-fleshed—human-hearted,—capable at their choice of meeting man absolutely in his own nature—feasting with him—talking with him—fighting with him, eye to eye, or breast to breast, as Mars with Diomed; or else, dealing with him in a more retired spirituality, as Apollo sending the plague upon the Greeks, when his quiver rattles at his shoulders as he moves, and yet the darts sent forth of it strike not as arrows, but as plague; or, finally, retiring completely into the material universe which they properly inhabit, and dealing with man through that, as Scamander with Achilles through his waves.

Nor is there anything whatever in the various actions recorded of the gods, however apparently ignoble, to indicate weakness of belief in them. Very frequently things which appear to us ignoble are merely the simplicities of a pure and truthful age. When Juno beats Diana about the ears with her own quiver, for instance, we start at first, as if Homer could not have believed that they were both real goddesses. But what should Juno have done? Killed Diana with a look? Nay, she neither wished to do so, nor could she have done so, by the very faith of Diana's goddessship. Diana is as immortal as herself. Frowned Diana into submission? But Diana has come expressly to try conclusions with her, and will by no means be frowned into submission. Wounded her with a celestial lance? That sounds more poetical, but it is in reality partly more savage, and partly more absurd, than Homer. More savage, for it makes Juno more cruel, therefore less divine; and more absurd, for it only seems elevated in tone, because we use the word "celestial," which means nothing. What sort of

a thing is a "celestial" lance? Not a wooden one. Of what then? Of moonbeams, or clouds, or mist. Well, therefore, Diana's arrows were of mist too; and her quiver, and herself, and Juno, with her lance, and all, vanish into mist. Why not have said at once, if that is all you mean, that two mists met, and one drove the other back? That would have been rational and intelligible, but not to talk of celestial lances. Homer had no such misty fancy; he believed the two goddesses were there in true bodies, with true weapons, on the true earth; and still I ask, what should Juno have done? Not beaten Diana? No; for it is unlady-like. Un-English-lady-like, yes; but by no means un-Greek-lady-like, nor even un-natural-lady-like. If a modern lady does *not* beat her servant or her rival about the ears, it is oftener because she is too weak, or too proud, than because she is of purer mind than Homer's Juno. She will not strike them; but she will overwork the one or slander the other without pity; and Homer would not have thought that one whit more goddess-like than striking them with her open hand.

If, however, the reader likes to suppose that while the two goddesses in personal presence thus fought with arrow and quiver, there was also a broader and vaster contest supposed by Homer between the elements they ruled; and that the goddess of the heavens, as she struck the goddess of the moon on the flushing cheek, was at the same instant exercising omnipresent power in the heavens themselves, and gathering clouds, with which, filled with the moon's own arrows or beams, she was encumbering and concealing the moon; he is welcome to this out-carrying of the idea, provided that he does not pretend to make it an interpretation instead of a mere extension, nor think to explain away my real, running, beautiful, beaten Diana, into a moon behind clouds.[1]

[1] Compare the exquisite lines of Longfellow on the sunset in *The Golden Legend:*

> The day is done, and slowly from the scene
> The stooping sun upgathers his spent shafts,
> And puts them back into his golden quiver.

It is only farther to be noted, that the Greek conception of Godhead, as it was much more real than we usually suppose, so it was much more bold and familiar than to a modern mind would be possible. I shall have something more to observe, in a little while, of the danger of our modern habit of endeavouring to raise ourselves to something like comprehension of the truth of divinity, instead of simply believing the words in which the Deity reveals Himself to us. The Greek erred rather on the other side, making hardly any effort to conceive divine mind as above the human; and no more shrinking from frank intercourse with a divine being, or dreading its immediate presence, than that of the simplest of mortals. Thus Atrides, enraged at his sword's breaking in his hand upon the helmet of Paris, after he had expressly invoked the assistance of Jupiter, exclaims aloud, as he would to a king who had betrayed him, "Jove, Father, there is not another god more evil-minded than thou!" and Helen, provoked at Paris's defeat, and oppressed with pouting shame both for him and for herself, when Venus appears at her side, and would lead her back to the delivered Paris, impatiently tells the goddess to "go and take care of Paris herself."

The modern mind is naturally, but vulgarly and unjustly, shocked by this kind of familiarity. Rightly understood, it is not so much a sign or misunderstanding of the divine nature as of good understanding of the human. The Greek lived, in all things, a healthy, and, in a certain degree, a perfect, life. He had no morbid or sickly feeling of any kind. He was accustomed to face death without the slightest shrinking, to undergo all kinds of bodily hardship without complaint, and to do what he supposed right and honourable in most cases, as a matter of course. Confident of his own immortality, and of the power of abstract justice, he expected to be dealt with in the next world as was right, and left the matter much in his god's hands; but being thus immortal, and finding in his own soul something which it seemed quite as difficult to master, as to rule the elements, he did not feel that it was an appalling superiority in those gods to have bodies of water, or fire, instead of flesh, and to have various work to

do among the clouds and waves, out of his human way; or sometimes, even, in a sort of service to himself. Was not the nourishment of herbs and flowers a kind of ministering to his wants? were not the gods in some sort his husbandmen, and spirit-servants? Their mere strength or omnipresence did not seem to him a distinction absolutely terrific. It might be the nature of one being to be in two places at once, and of another to be only in one; but that did not seem of itself to infer any absolute lordliness of one nature above the other, any more than an insect must be a nobler creature than a man, because it can see on four sides of its head, and the man only in front. They could kill him or torture him, it was true; but even that not unjustly, or not for ever. There was a fate, and a Divine Justice, greater than they; so that if they did wrong, and he right, he might fight it out with them, and have the better of them at last. In a general way, they were wiser, stronger, and better than he; and to ask counsel of them, to obey them, to sacrifice to them, to thank them for all good, this was well; but to be utterly downcast before them, or not to tell them his mind in plain Greek if they seemed to him to be conducting themselves in an ungodly manner—this would not be well.

Such being their general idea of the gods, we can now easily understand the habitual tone of their feelings towards what was beautiful in nature. With us, observe, the idea of the Divinity is apt to get separated from the life of nature; and imagining our God upon a cloudy throne, far above the earth, and not in the flowers or waters, we approach those visible things with a theory that they are dead, governed by physical laws, and so forth. But coming to them, we find the theory fail; that they are not dead; that, say what we choose about them, the instinctive sense of their being alive is too strong for us; and in scorn of all physical law, the wilful fountain sings, and the kindly flowers rejoice. And then, puzzled, and yet happy; pleased, and yet ashamed of being so; accepting sympathy from nature, which we do not believe it gives, and giving sympathy to nature, which we do not believe it receives—mixing, besides, all manner of purposeful play and conceit

with these involuntary fellowships—we fall necessarily into the curious web of hesitating sentiment, pathetic fallacy, and wandering fancy, which form a great part of our modern view of nature. But the Greek never removed his god out of nature at all; never attempted for a moment to contradict his instinctive sense that God was everywhere. "The tree *is* glad," said he, "I know it is; I can cut it down; no matter, there was a nymph in it. The water *does* sing," said he; "I can dry it up; but no matter, there was a naiad in it." But in thus clearly defining his belief, observe, he threw it entirely into a human form, and gave his faith to nothing but the image of his own humanity. What sympathy and fellowship he had, were always for the spirit *in* the stream, not for the stream; always for the dryad *in* the wood, not for the wood. Content with this human sympathy, he approached the actual waves and woody fibres with no sympathy at all. The spirit that ruled them, he received as a plain fact. Them, also, ruled and material, he received as plain facts; they, without their spirit, were dead enough. A rose was good for scent, and a stream for sound and coolness; for the rest, one was no more than leaves, the other no more than water; he could not make anything else of them; and the divine power, which was involved in their existence, having been all distilled away by him into an independent Flora or Thetis, the poor leaves or waves were left, in mere cold corporealness, to make the most of their being discernibly red and soft, clear and wet, and unacknowledged in any other power whatsoever.

Then, observe farther, the Greeks lived in the midst of the most beautiful nature, and were as familiar with blue sea, clear air, and sweet outlines of mountain, as we are with brick walls, black smoke, and level fields. This perfect familiarity rendered all such scenes of natural beauty unexciting, if not indifferent to them, by lulling and overwearying the imagination as far as it was concerned with such things; but there was another kind of beauty which they found it required effort to obtain, and which, when thoroughly obtained, seemed more glorious than any of this wild loveliness—the beauty of the human countenance and form.

This, they perceived, could only be reached by continual exercise of virtue; and it was in Heaven's sight, and theirs, all the more beautiful because it needed this self-denial to obtain it. So they set themselves to reach this, and having gained it, gave it their principal thoughts, and set it off with beautiful dress as best they might. But making this their object, they were obliged to pass their lives in simple exercise and disciplined employments. Living wholesomely, giving themselves no fever fits, either by fasting or overeating, constantly in the open air, and full of animal spirit and physical power, they became incapable of every morbid condition of mental emotion. Unhappy love, disappointed ambition, spiritual despondency, or any other disturbing sensation, had little power over the well-braced nerves, and healthy flow of the blood; and what bitterness might yet fasten on them was soon boxed or raced out of a boy, and spun or woven out of a girl, or danced out of both. They had indeed their sorrows, true and deep, but still, more like children's sorrows than ours, whether bursting into open cry of pain, or hid with shuddering under the veil, still passing over the soul as clouds do over heaven, not sullying it, not mingling with it;—darkening it perhaps long or utterly, but still not becoming one with it, and for the most part passing away in dashing rain of tears, and leaving the man unchanged; in nowise affecting, as our sorrow does, the whole tone of his thought and imagination thenceforward.

How far our melancholy may be deeper and wider than theirs, in its roots and view, and therefore nobler, we shall consider presently; but at all events, they had the advantage of us in being entirely free from all those dim and feverish sensations which result from unhealthy state of the body. I believe that a large amount of the dreamy and sentimental sadness, tendency to reverie, and general patheticalness of modern life results merely from derangement of stomach; holding to the Greek life the same relation that the feverish night of an adult does to a child's sleep.

36. The Landscape of Homer.

As far as I recollect, without a single exception, every Homeric landscape, intended to be beautiful, is composed of a fountain, a meadow, and a shady grove. This ideal is very interestingly marked, as intended for a perfect one, in the fifth book of the *Odyssey;* when Mercury himself stops for a moment, though on a message, to look at a landscape "which even an immortal might be gladdened to behold." This landscape consists of a cave covered with a running vine, all blooming into grapes, and surrounded by a grove of alder, poplar, and sweet-smelling cypress. Four fountains of white (foaming) water, springing *in succession* (mark the orderliness), and close to one another, flow away in different directions, through a meadow full of violets and parsley (parsley, to mark its moisture, being elsewhere called "marsh-nourished," and associated with the lotus[1]); the air is perfumed not only by these violets and by the sweet cypress, but by Calypso's fire of finely-chopped cedar wood, which sends a smoke, as of incense, through the island; Calypso herself is singing; and finally, upon the trees are resting, or roosting, owls, hawks, and "long-tongued sea-crows." Whether these last are considered as a part of the ideal landscape, as marine singing-birds, I know not; but the approval of Mercury appears to be elicited chiefly by the fountains and violet meadow.

Now the notable things in this description are, first, the evident subservience of the whole landscape to human comfort, to the foot, the taste, or the smell; and, secondly, that throughout the passage there is not a single figurative word expressive of the things being in any wise other than plain grass, fruit, or flower. I have used the term "spring" of the fountains, because, without doubt, Homer means that they sprang forth brightly, having their source at the foot of the rocks (as copious fountains nearly always have); but Homer does not say "spring," he says simply flow, and uses only one

[1] *Iliad*, ii., 776.

word for "growing softly," or "richly," of the tall trees, the vine, and the violets. There is, however, some expression of sympathy with the sea-birds; he speaks of them in precisely the same terms, as in other places of naval nations, saying they "have care of the works of the sea."

If we glance through the references to pleasant landscape which occur in other parts of the *Odyssey*, we shall always be struck by this quiet subjection of their every feature to human service, and by the excessive similarity in the scenes. Perhaps the spot intended, after this, to be most perfect, may be the garden of Alcinous, where the principal ideas are, still more definitely, order, symmetry, and fruitfulness; the beds being duly ranged between rows of vines, which, as well as the pear, apple, and fig-trees, bear fruit continually, some grapes being yet sour, while others are getting black; there are plenty of "*orderly* square beds of herbs," chiefly leeks, and two fountains, one running through the garden, and one under the pavement of the palace to a reservoir for the citizens. Ulysses, pausing to contemplate this scene, is described nearly in the same terms as Mercury pausing to contemplate the wilder meadow; and it is interesting to observe, that, in spite of all Homer's love of symmetry, the god's admiration is excited by the free fountains, wild violets, and wandering vine; but the mortal's, by the vines in rows, the leeks in beds, and the fountains in pipes.

Ulysses has, however, one touching reason for loving vines in rows. His father had given him fifty rows for himself, when he was a boy, with corn between them (just as it now grows in Italy). Proving his identity afterwards to his father, whom he finds at work in his garden, "with thick gloves on, to keep his hands from the thorns," he reminds him of these fifty rows of vines, and of the "thirteen pear-trees and ten apple-trees" which he had given him; and Laertes faints upon his neck.

If Ulysses had not been so much of a gardener, it might have been received as a sign of considerable feeling for landscape beauty, that, intending to pay the very highest possible compliment to the Princess Nausicaa (and having indeed, the moment before, gravely asked her whether she was a

goddess or not), he says that he feels, at seeing her, exactly as he did when he saw the young palm-tree growing at Apollo's shrine at Delos. But I think the taste for trim hedges and upright trunks has its usual influence over him here also, and that he merely means to tell the princess that she is delightfully tall and straight.

The princess is, however, pleased by his address, and tells him to wait outside the town, till she can speak to her father about him. The spot to which she directs him is another ideal piece of landscape, composed of a "beautiful grove of aspen poplars, a fountain, and a meadow," near the roadside; in fact, as nearly as possible such a scene as meets the eye of the traveller every instant on the much-despised lines of road through lowland France; for instance, on the railway between Arras and Amiens;—scenes, to my mind, quite exquisite in the various grouping and grace of their innumerable poplar avenues, casting sweet, tremulous shadows over their level meadows and labyrinthine streams. We know that the princess means aspen poplars, because soon afterwards we find her fifty maidservants at the palace, all spinning, and in perpetual motion, compared to the "leaves of the tall poplar;" and it is with exquisite feeling that it is made afterwards [1] the chief tree in the groves of Proserpine; its light and quivering leafage having exactly the melancholy expression of fragility, faintness, and inconstancy which the ancients attributed to the disembodied spirit. The likeness to the poplars by the streams of Amiens is more marked still in the *Iliad*, where the young Simois, struck by Ajax, falls to the earth "like an aspen that has grown in an irrigated meadow, smooth-trunked, the soft shoots springing from its top, which some coach-making man has cut down with his keen iron, that he may fit a wheel of it to a fair chariot, and it lies parching by the side of the stream." It is sufficiently notable that Homer, living in mountainous and rocky countries, dwells thus delightedly on all the *flat* bits; and so I think invariably the inhabitants of mountain countries do, but the inhabitants of the plains do not, in any similar way, dwell delightedly on the mountains. The Dutch painters are per-

[1] *Odyssey*, x., 510.

fectly contented with their flat fields and pollards: Rubens, though he had seen the Alps, usually composes his landscapes of a hayfield or two, plenty of pollards and willows, a distant spire, a Dutch house with a moat about it, a windmill, and a ditch. The Flemish sacred painters are the only ones who introduce mountains in the distance, as we shall see presently; but rather in a formal way than with any appearance of enjoyment. So Shakspeare never speaks of mountains with the slightest joy, but only of lowland flowers, flat fields, and Warwickshire streams. And if we talk to the mountaineer, he will usually characterize his own country to us as a "pays affreux," or in some equivalent, perhaps even more violent, German term: but the lowland peasant does not think his country frightful; he either will have no ideas beyond it, or about it; or will think it a very perfect country, and be apt to regard any deviation from its general principle of flatness with extreme disfavour; as the Lincolnshire farmer in *Alton Locke:* "I'll shaw 'ee some'at like a field o' beans, I wool—none o' this here darned ups and downs o' hills, to shake a body's victuals out of his inwards—all so vlat as a barn's vloor, for vorty mile on end—there's the country to live in!"

I do not say whether this be altogether right (though certainly not wholly wrong), but it seems to me that there must be in the simple freshness and fruitfulness of level land, in its pale upright trees, and gentle lapse of silent streams, enough for the satisfaction of the human mind in general; and I so far agree with Homer, that, if I had to educate an artist to the full perception of the meaning of the word "gracefulness" in landscape, I should send him neither to Italy nor to Greece, but simply to those poplar groves between Arras and Amiens.

But to return more definitely to our Homeric landscape. When it is perfect, we have, as in the above instances, the foliage and meadows together; when imperfect, it is always either the foliage or the meadow; pre-eminently the meadow, or arable field. Thus, meadows of asphodel are prepared for the happier dead; and even Orion, a hunter among the mountains in his lifetime, pursues the ghosts of beasts in

these asphodel meadows after death.[1] So the sirens sing in a meadow; and throughout the *Odyssey* there is a general tendency to the depreciation of poor Ithaca, because it is rocky, and only fit for goats, and has "no meadows;" for which reason Telemachus refuses Atrides's present of horses, congratulating the Spartan king at the same time on ruling over a plain which has "plenty of lotus in it, and rushes," with corn and barley. Note this constant dwelling on the marsh plants, or, at least, those which grow in flat and well-irrigated land, or beside streams: when Scamander, for instance, is restrained by Vulcan, Homer says, very sorrowfully, that "all his lotus, and reeds, and rushes were burnt;" and thus Ulysses, after being shipwrecked and nearly drowned, and beaten about the sea for many days and nights, on raft and mast, at last getting ashore at the mouth of a large river, casts himself down first upon its *rushes*, and then, in thankfulness, kisses the "corn-giving land," as most opposed, in his heart, to the fruitless and devouring sea.[2]

In this same passage, also, we find some peculiar expressions of the delight which the Greeks had in trees; for, when Ulysses first comes in sight of land, which gladdens him, "as the reviving of a father from his sickness gladdens his children," it is not merely the sight of the land itself which gives him such pleasure, but of the "land and *wood*." Homer never throws away any words, at least in such a place as this; and what in another poet would have been merely the filling up of the deficient line with an otherwise useless word, is in him the expression of the general Greek sense, that land of any kind was in nowise grateful or acceptable till there was *wood* upon it (or corn; but the corn, in the flats, could not be seen so far as the black masses of forest on the hill sides), and that, as in being rushy and corn-giving, the low land, so in being woody, the high land, was most grateful to the mind of the man who for days and nights had been wearied on the engulphing sea. And this general idea of wood and corn, as the types of the fatness of the whole

[1] *Odyssey*, xi., 571, xxiv., 13. The couch of Ceres, with Homer's usual faithfulness, is made of a *ploughed* field, v., 127.

[2] *Odyssey*, v., 398.

earth, is beautifully marked in another place of the *Odyssey*,[1] where the sailors in a desert island, having no flour of corn to offer as a meat offering with their sacrifices, take the leaves of the trees, and scatter them over the burnt offering instead.

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37. The Mediæval View of Nature.

THE testimony of mediæval art, sculpture, and literature, taken in its breadth, is very curiously conclusive. It marks the mediæval mind as agreeing altogether with the ancients, in holding that flat land, brooks, and groves of aspens, compose the pleasant places of the earth, and that rocks and mountains are, for inhabitation, altogether to be reprobated and detested; but as disagreeing with the classical mind totally in this other most important respect, that the pleasant flat land is never a ploughed field, nor a rich lotus meadow good for pasture, but *garden* ground covered with flowers, and divided by fragrant hedges, with a castle in the middle of it. The aspens are delighted in, not because they are good for "coach-making men" to make cart-wheels of, but because they are shady and graceful; and the fruit-trees, covered with delicious fruit, especially apple and orange, occupy still more important positions in the scenery. Singing-birds—not "sea-crows," but nightingales[2]—perch on every bough; and the ideal occupation of mankind is not to cultivate either the garden or the meadow, but to gather roses and eat oranges in the one, and ride out hawking over the other.

Finally, mountain scenery, though considered as disagreeable for general inhabitation, is always introduced as being proper to meditate in, or to encourage communion with higher beings; and in the ideal landscape of daily life,

[1] *Odyssey*, xii., 357.

[2] The peculiar dislike felt by the mediævals for the *sea*, is so interesting a subject of inquiry, that I have reserved it for separate discussion in another work, in present preparation, *Harbours of England* (published in 1856).

mountains are considered agreeable things enough, so that they be far enough away.

In this great change there are three vital points to be noticed.

The first, the disdain of agricultural pursuits by the nobility; a fatal change, and one gradually bringing about the ruin of that nobility. It is expressed in the mediæval landscape by the eminently pleasurable and horticultural character of everything; by the fences, hedges, castle walls, and masses of useless, but lovely flowers, especially roses. The knights and ladies are represented always as singing, or making love, in these pleasant places. The idea of setting an old knight, like Laertes (whatever his state of fallen fortune), "with thick gloves on to keep his hands from the thorns," to prune a row of vines, would have been regarded as the most monstrous violation of the decencies of life; and a senator, once detected in the home employments of Cincinnatus, could, I suppose, thenceforward hardly have appeared in society.

The second vital point is the evidence of a more sentimental enjoyment of external nature. A Greek, wishing really to enjoy himself, shut himself into a beautiful atrium, with an excellent dinner, and a society of philosophical or musical friends. But a mediæval knight went into his pleasance, to gather roses and hear the birds sing; or rode out hunting or hawking. His evening feast, though riotous enough sometimes, was not the height of his day's enjoyment; and if the attractions of the world are to be shown typically to him, as opposed to the horrors of death, they are never represented by a full feast in a chamber, but by a delicate dessert in an orange grove, with musicians under the trees; or a ride on a May morning, hawk on fist.

This change is evidently a healthy, and a very interesting one.

The third vital point is the marked sense that this hawking and apple-eating are not altogether right; that there is something else to be done in the world than that; and that the mountains, as opposed to the pleasant garden-ground, are places where that other something may best be learned;

which is evidently a piece of infinite and new respect for the mountains, and another healthy change in the tone of the human heart.

Let us glance at the signs and various results of these changes, one by one.

The two first named, evil and good as they are, are very closely connected. The more poetical delight in external nature proceeds just from the fact that it is no longer looked upon with the eye of the farmer; and in proportion as the herbs and flowers cease to be regarded as useful, they are felt to be charming. Leeks are not now the most important objects in the garden, but lilies and roses; the herbage which a Greek would have looked at only with a view to the number of horses it would feed, is regarded by the mediæval knight as a green carpet for fair feet to dance upon, and the beauty of its softness and colour is proportionately felt by him; while the brook, which the Greek rejoiced to dismiss into a reservoir under the palace threshold, would be, by the mediæval, distributed into pleasant pools, or forced into fountains; and regarded alternately as a mirror for fair faces, and a witchery to ensnare the sunbeams and the rainbow.

And this change of feeling involves two others, very important. When the flowers and grass were regarded as means of life, and therefore (as the thoughtful labourer of the soil must always regard them) with the reverence due to those gifts of God which were most necessary to his existence; although their own beauty was less felt, their proceeding from the Divine hand was more seriously acknowledged, and the herb yielding seed, and fruit-tree yielding fruit, though in themselves less admired, were yet solemnly connected in the heart with the reverence of Ceres, Pomona, or Pan. But when the sense of these necessary uses was more or less lost, among the upper classes, by the delegation of the art of husbandry to the hands of the peasant, the flower and fruit, whose bloom or richness thus became a mere source of pleasure, were regarded with less solemn sense of the Divine gift in them; and were converted rather into toys than treasures, chance gifts for gaiety, rather than promised rewards of labour; so that while the Greek could

hardly have trodden the formal furrow, or plucked the clusters from the trellised vine, without reverent thoughts of the deities of field and leaf, who gave the seed to fructify, and the bloom to darken, the mediæval knight plucked the violet to wreathe in his lady's hair, or strewed the idle rose on the turf at her feet, with little sense of anything in the nature that gave them, but a frail, accidental, involuntary exuberance; while also the Jewish sacrificial system being now done away, as well as the Pagan mythology, and, with it, the whole conception of meat offering or firstfruits offering, the chiefest seriousnesses of all the thoughts connected with the gifts of nature faded from the minds of the classes of men concerned with art and literature; while the peasant, reduced to serf level, was incapable of imaginative thought, owing to his want of general cultivation. But on the other hand, exactly in proportion as the idea of definite spiritual presence in material nature was lost, the mysterious sense of *unaccountable* life in the things themselves would be increased, and the mind would instantly be laid open to all those currents of fallacious, but pensive and pathetic sympathy, which we have seen to be characteristic of modern times.

Farther: a singular difference would necessarily result from the far greater loneliness of baronial life, deprived as it was of all interest in agricultural pursuits. The palace of a Greek leader in early times might have gardens, fields, and farms around it, but was sure to be near some busy city or seaport: in later times, the city itself became the principal dwelling-place, and the country was visited only to see how the farm went on, or traversed in a line of march. Far other was the life of the mediæval baron, nested on his solitary jut of crag; entering into cities only occasionally for some grave political or warrior's purpose, and, for the most part, passing the years of his life in lion-like isolation; the village inhabited by his retainers straggling indeed about the slopes of the rocks at his feet, but his own dwelling standing gloomily apart, between them and the uncompanionable clouds, commanding, from sunset to sunrise, the flowing flame of some calm unvoyaged river, and the endless undulation of the untraversable hills. How different must the thoughts about nature

have been, of the noble who lived among the bright marble porticoes of the Greek groups of temple or palace—in the midst of a plain covered with corn and olives, and by the shore of a sparkling and freighted sea—from those of the master of some mountain promontory in the green recesses of Northern Europe, watching night by night, from amongst his heaps of storm-broken stone, rounded into towers, the lightning of the lonely sea flash round the sands of Harlech, or the mists changing their shapes for ever, among the changeless pines, that fringe the crests of Jura.

Nor was it without similar effect on the minds of men that their journeyings and pilgrimages became more frequent than those of the Greek, the extent of ground traversed in the course of them larger, and the mode of travel more companionless. To the Greek, a voyage to Egypt, or the Hellespont, was the subject of lasting fame and fable, and the forests of the Danube and the rocks of Sicily closed for him the gates of the intelligible world. What parts of that narrow world he crossed were crossed with fleets or armies; the camp always populous on the plain, and the ships drawn in cautious symmetry around the shore. But to the mediæval knight, from Scottish moor to Syrian sand, the world was one great exercise ground, or field of adventure; the staunch pacing of his charger penetrated the pathlessness of outmost forest, and sustained the sultriness of the most secret desert. Frequently alone—or, if accompanied, for the most part only by retainers of lower rank, incapable of entering into complete sympathy with any of his thoughts—he must have been compelled often to enter into dim companionship with the silent nature around him, and must assuredly sometimes have talked to the wayside flowers of his love, and to the fading clouds of his ambition.

But, on the other hand, the idea of retirement from the world for the sake of self-mortification, of combat with demons, or communion with angels, and with their King—authoritatively commended as it was to all men by the continual practice of Christ Himself—gave to all mountain solitude at once a sanctity and a terror, in the mediæval mind, which were altogether different from anything that it had pos-

sessed in the un-Christian periods. On the one side, there was an idea of sanctity attached to rocky wilderness, because it had always been among hills that the Deity had manifested Himself most intimately to men, and to the hills that His saints had nearly always retired for meditation, for especial communion with Him, and to prepare for death. Men acquainted with the history of Moses, alone at Horeb, or with Israel at Sinai—of Elijah by the brook Cherith, and in the Horeb cave; of the deaths of Moses and Aaron on Hor and Nebo; of the preparation of Jephthah's daughter for her death among the Judea mountains; of the continual retirement of Christ Himself to the mountains for prayer, His temptation in the desert of the Dead Sea, His sermon on the hills of Capernaum, His transfiguration on the crest of Tabor, and His evening and morning walks over Olivet for the four or five days preceding His crucifixion—were not likely to look with irreverent or unloving eyes upon the blue hills that girded their golden horizon, or drew down upon them the mysterious clouds out of the height of the darker heaven. But with this impression of their greater sanctity was involved also that of a peculiar terror. In all this—their haunting by the memories of prophets, the presences of angels, and the everlasting thoughts and words of the Redeemer—the mountain ranges seemed separated from the active world, and only to be fitly approached by hearts which were condemnatory of it. Just in so much as it appeared necessary for the noblest men to retire to the hill-recesses before their missions could be accomplished, or their spirits perfected, in so far did the daily world seem by comparison to be pronounced profane and dangerous; and to those who loved that world, and its work, the mountains were thus voiceful with perpetual rebuke, and necessarily contemplated with a kind of pain and fear, such as a man engrossed by vanity feels at being by some accident forced to hear a startling sermon, or to assist at a funeral service. Every association of this kind was deepened by the practice and the precept of the time; and thousands of hearts, which might otherwise have felt that there was loveliness in the wild landscape, shrank from it in dread, because they knew

that the monk retired to it for penance, and the hermit for contemplation. The horror which the Greek had felt for hills only when they were uninhabited and barren, attached itself now to many of the sweetest spots of earth; the feeling was conquered by political interests, but never by admiration; military ambition seized the frontier rock, or maintained itself in the unassailable pass; but it was only for their punishment, or in their despair, that men consented to tread the crocused slopes of the Chartreuse, or the soft glades and dewy pastures of Vallombrosa.

In all these modifications of temper and principle there appears much which tends to a passionate, affectionate, or awe-struck observance of the features of natural scenery, closely resembling, in all but this superstitious dread of mountains, our feelings at the present day. But *one* character which the mediævals had in common with the ancients, and that exactly the most eminent character in both, opposed itself steadily to all the feelings we have hitherto been examining, the admiration, namely, and constant watchfulness, of human beauty. Exercised in nearly the same manner as the Greeks, from their youth upwards, their countenances were cast even in a higher mould; for, although somewhat less regular in feature, and affected by minglings of Northern bluntness and stolidity of general expression, together with greater thinness of lip and shaggy formlessness of brow, these less sculpturesque features were, nevertheless, touched with a seriousness and refinement proceeding first from the modes of thought inculcated by the Christian religion, and secondly from their more romantic and various life. Hence a degree of personal beauty, both male and female, was attained in the Middle Ages, with which classical periods could show nothing for a moment comparable: and this beauty was set forth by the most perfect splendour, united with grace, in dress, which the human race have hitherto invented. The strength of their art-genius was directed in great part to this object; and their best workmen and most brilliant fanciers were employed in wreathing the mail or embroidering the robe. The exquisite arts of enamelling and chasing metal enabled them to make the armour as

radiant and delicate as the plumage of a tropical bird; and the most various and vivid imaginations were displayed in the alternations of colour, and fiery freaks of form, on shield and crest: so that of all the beautiful things which the eyes of men could fall upon in the world about them, the most beautiful must have been a young knight riding out in morning sunshine, and in faithful hope:

> His broad, clear brow in sunlight glowed;
> On burnished hooves his war-horse trode;
> From underneath his helmet flowed
> His coal-black curls, as on he rode.
> All in the blue, unclouded weather,
> Thick jewelled shone the saddle leather;
> The helmet and the helmet feather
> Burned like one burning flame together;
> And the gemmy bridle glittered free,
> Like to some branch of stars we see
> Hung in the golden galaxy.

Now, the effect of this superb presence of human beauty on men in general was, exactly as it had been in Greek times, first, to turn their thoughts and glances in great part away from all other beauty but that, and to make the grass of the field take to them always more or less the aspect of a carpet to dance upon, a lawn to tilt upon, or a serviceable crop of hay; and, secondly, in what attention they paid to this lower nature, to make them dwell exclusively on what was graceful, symmetrical, and bright in colour. All that was rugged, rough, dark, wild, unterminated, they rejected at once, as the domain of "salvage men" and monstrous giants: all that they admired was tender, bright, balanced, enclosed, symmetrical—only symmetrical in the noble and free sense: for what we moderns call "symmetry" or "balance," differs as much from mediæval symmetry as the poise of a grocer's scales, or the balance of an Egyptian mummy with its hands tied to its sides, does from the balance of a knight on his horse, striking with the battle-axe, at the gallop; the mummy's balance looking wonderfully perfect, and yet sure to be one-sided if you weigh the dust of it—the knight's balance swaying and changing like the wind, and yet as true and accurate as the laws of life.

And this love of symmetry was still farther enhanced by the peculiar duties required of art at the time; for, in order to fit a flower or leaf for inlaying in armour, or showing clearly in glass, it was absolutely necessary to take away its complexity, and reduce it to the condition of a disciplined and orderly pattern; and this the more, because, for all military purposes, the device, whatever it was, had to be distinctly intelligible at extreme distance. That it should be a good imitation of nature, when seen near, was of no moment; but it was of highest moment that when first the knight's banner flashed in the sun at the turn of the mountain road, or rose, torn and bloody, through the drift of the battle dust, it should still be discernible what the bearing was:

> At length, the freshening western blast
> Aside the shroud of battle cast;
> And first the ridge of mingled spears
> Above the brightening cloud appears;
> And in the smoke the pennons flew,
> As in the storm the white sea-mew;
> Then marked they, dashing broad and far
> The broken billows of the war.
> Wide ranged the battle on the plain;
> Spears shook, and falchions flashed amain;
> Fell England's arrow-flight like rain;
> Crests rose, and stooped, and rose again,
> Wild and disorderly.
> Amidst the scene of tumult, high,
> *They saw Lord Marmion's falcon fly,*
> *And stainless Tunstall's banner white,*
> *And Edmund Howard's lion bright.*

It was needed, not merely that they should see it was a falcon, but Lord Marmion's falcon; not only a lion, but the Howards' lion. Hence, to the one imperative end of *intelligibility*, every minor resemblance to nature was sacrificed, and above all, the *curved*, which are chiefly the confusing lines; so that the straight, elongated back, doubly elongated tail, projected and separate claws, and other rectilinear unnaturalnesses of form, became the means by which the leopard was, in midst of the mist and storm of battle, distinguished from the dog, or the lion from the wolf; the most

admirable fierceness and vitality being, in spite of these necessary changes (so often shallowly sneered at by the modern workman), obtained by the old designer.

Farther, it was necessary to the brilliant harmony of colour, and clear setting forth of everything, that all confusing shadows, all dim and doubtful lines should be rejected: hence at once an utter denial of natural appearances by the great body of workmen; and a calm rest in a practice of representation which would make either boar or lion blue, scarlet, or golden, according to the device of the knight, or the need of such and such a colour in that place of the pattern; and which wholly denied that any substance ever cast a shadow, or was affected by any kind of obscurity.

All this was in its way, and for its end, absolutely right, admirable, and delightful; and those who despise it, laugh at it, or derive no pleasure from it, are utterly ignorant of the highest principles of art, and are mere tyros and beginners in the practice of colour. But, admirable though it might be, one necessary result of it was a farther withdrawal of the observation of men from the refined and subtle beauty of nature; so that the workman who first was led to think *lightly* of natural beauty, as being subservient to human, was next led to think *innaccurately* of natural beauty, because he had continually to alter and simplify it for his practical purposes.

38. Modern Landscape.

We turn our eyes, as boldly and as quickly as may be, from the serene fields and skies of mediæval art, to the most characteristic examples of modern landscape. And, I believe, the first thing that will strike us, or that ought to strike us, is their *cloudiness*.

Out of perfect light and motionless air, we find ourselves on a sudden brought under sombre skies, and into drifting wind; and, with fickle sunbeams flashing in our face, or utterly drenched with sweep of rain, we are reduced to track the changes of the shadows on the grass, or watch the rents

of twilight through angry cloud. And we find that whereas all the pleasure of the mediæval was in *stability*, *definiteness*, and *luminousness*, we are expected to rejoice in darkness, and triumph in mutability; to lay the foundation of happiness in things which momentarily change or fade; and to expect the utmost satisfaction and instruction from what it is impossible to arrest, and difficult to comprehend.

We find, however, together with this general delight in breeze and darkness, much attention to the real form of clouds, and careful drawing of effects of mist; so that the appearance of objects, as seen through it, becomes a subject of science with us; and the faithful representation of that appearance is made of primal importance, under the name of aërial perspective. The aspects of sunset and sunrise, with all their attendant phenomena of cloud and mist, are watchfully delineated; and in ordinary daylight landscape, the sky is considered of so much importance, that a principal mass of foliage, or a whole foreground, is unhesitatingly thrown into shade merely to bring out the form of a white cloud. So that, if a general and characteristic name were needed for modern landscape art, none better could be invented than "the service of clouds."

And this name would, unfortunately, be characteristic of our art in more ways than one. In a former chapter, I said that all the Greeks spoke kindly about the clouds, except Aristophanes; and he, I am sorry to say (since his report is so unfavourable) is the only Greek who had studied them attentively. He tells us, first, that they are "great goddesses to idle men;" then, that they are "mistresses of disputings, and logic, and monstrosities, and noisy chattering;" declares that whoso believes in their divinity must first disbelieve in Jupiter, and place supreme power in the hands of an unknown god "Whirlwind;" and, finally, he displays their influence over the mind of one of their disciples, in his sudden desire "to speak ingeniously concerning smoke."

There is, I fear, an infinite truth in this Aristophanic judgment applied to our modern cloud-worship. Assuredly, much of the love of mystery in our romances, our poetry, our art, and, above all, in our metaphysics, must come under

that definition so long ago given by the great Greek, "speaking ingeniously concerning smoke." And much of the instinct, which, partially developed in painting, may be now seen throughout every mode of exertion of mind,—the easily encouraged doubt, easily excited curiosity, habitual agitation, and delight in the changing and the marvellous, as opposed to the old quiet serenity of social custom and religious faith,—is again deeply defined in those few words, the "dethroning of Jupiter," the "coronation of the whirlwind."

Nor of whirlwind merely, but also of darkness or ignorance respecting all stable facts. That darkening of the foreground to bring out the white clouds, is, in one aspect of it, a type of the subjection of all plain and positive fact, to what is uncertain and unintelligible. And as we examine farther into the matter, we shall be struck by another great difference between the old and modern landscape, namely, that in the old no one ever thought of drawing anything but as well *as he could*. That might not be *well*, as we have seen in the case of rocks; but it was as well as he *could*, and always distinctly. Leaf, or stone, or animal, or man, it was equally drawn with care and clearness, and its essential characters shown. If it was an oak tree, the acorns were drawn; if a flint pebble, its veins were drawn; if an arm of the sea, its fish were drawn; if a group of figures, their faces and dresses were drawn—to the very last subtlety of expression and end of thread that could be got into the space, far off or near. But now our ingenuity is all "concerning smoke." Nothing is truly drawn but that; all else is vague, slight, imperfect; got with as little pains as possible. You examine your closest foreground, and find no leaves; your largest oak, and find no acorns; your human figure, and find a spot of red paint instead of a face; and in all this, again and again, the Aristophanic words come true, and the clouds seem to be "great goddesses to idle men."

The next thing that will strike us, after this love of clouds, is the love of liberty. Whereas the mediæval was always shutting himself into castles, and behind fosses, and drawing brickwork neatly, and beds of flowers primly, our painters delight in getting to the open fields and moors; abhor all

hedges and moats; never paint anything but free-growing trees, and rivers gliding "at their own sweet will;" eschew formality down to the smallest detail; break and displace the brickwork which the mediæval would have carefully cemented; leave unpruned the thickets he would have delicately trimmed; and, carrying the love of liberty even to license, and the love of wildness even to ruin, take pleasure at last in every aspect of age and desolation which emancipates the objects of nature from the government of men; on the castle wall displacing its tapestry with ivy, and spreading, through the garden, the bramble for the rose.

Connected with this love of liberty we find a singular manifestation of love of mountains, and see our painters traversing the wildest places of the globe in order to obtain subjects with craggy foregrounds and purple distances. Some few of them remain content with pollards and flat land; but these are always men of third-rate order; and the leading masters, while they do not reject the beauty of the low grounds, reserve their highest powers to paint Alpine peaks or Italian promontories. And it is eminently noticeable, also, that this pleasure in the mountains is never mingled with fear, or tempered by a spirit of meditation, as with the mediæval; but is always free and fearless, brightly exhilarating, and wholly unreflective: so that the painter feels that his mountain foreground may be more consistently animated by a sportsman than a hermit; and our modern society in general goes to the mountains, not to fast, but to feast, and leaves their glaciers covered with chicken-bones and egg-shells.

Connected with this want of any sense of solemnity in mountain scenery, is a general profanity of temper in regarding all the rest of nature; that is to say, a total absence of faith in the presence of any deity therein. Whereas the mediæval never painted a cloud, but with the purpose of placing an angel in it; and a Greek never entered a wood without expecting to meet a god in it; *we* should think the appearance of an angel in the cloud wholly unnatural, and should be seriously surprised by meeting a god anywhere. Our chief ideas about the wood are connected with poaching.

We have no belief that the clouds contain more than so many inches of rain or hail, and from our ponds and ditches expect nothing more divine than ducks and watercresses.

Finally: connected with this profanity of temper is a strong tendency to deny the sacred element of colour, and make our boast in blackness. For though occasionally glaring, or violent, modern colour is on the whole eminently sombre, tending continually to grey or brown, and by many of our best painters consistently falsified, with a confessed pride in what they call chaste or subdued tints; so that, whereas a mediæval paints his sky bright blue, and his foreground bright green, gilds the towers of his castle, and clothes his figures with purple and white, we paint our sky grey, our foreground black, and our foliage brown, and think that enough is sacrificed to the sun in admitting the dangerous brightness of a scarlet cloak or a blue jacket.

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39. Scott's View of Nature.

First, observe Scott's habit of looking at nature neither as dead, or merely material, in the way that Homer regards it, nor as altered by his own feelings, in the way that Keats and Tennyson regard it, but as having an animation and pathos of *its own*, wholly irrespective of human presence or passion —an animation which Scott loves and sympathizes with, as he would with a fellow-creature, forgetting himself altogether, and subduing his own humanity before what seems to him the power of the landscape:

> Yon lonely thorn,—would he could tell
> The changes of his parent dell,
> Since he, so grey and stubborn now,
> Waved in each breeze a sapling bough!
> Would he could tell, how deep the shade
> A thousand mingled branches made,
> How broad the shadows of the oak,
> How clung the rowan to the rock,
> And through the foliage showed his head,
> With narrow leaves and berries red!

Scott does not dwell on the grey stubbornness of the thorn, because he himself is at that moment disposed to be dull, or stubborn; neither on the cheerful peeping forth of the rowan, because he himself is at that moment cheerful or curious, but he perceives them both with the kind of interest that he would take in an old man, or a climbing boy; forgetting himself, in sympathy with either age or youth.

> And from the grassy slope he sees
> The Greta flow to meet the Tees.
> Where issuing from her darksome bed,
> She caught the morning's eastern red,
> And through the softening vale below
> Rolled her bright waves in rosy glow,
> All blushing to her bridal bed,
> Like some shy maid, in convent bred;
> While linnet, lark, and blackbird gay
> Sing forth her nuptial roundelay.

Is Scott, or are the persons of his story, gay at this moment? Far from it. Neither Scott nor Risingham are happy, but the Greta is; and all Scott's sympathy is ready for the Greta, on the instant.

Observe, therefore, this is not *pathetic* fallacy; for there is no passion in *Scott* which alters nature. It is not the lover's passion, making him think the larkspurs are listening for his lady's foot; it is not the miser's passion, making him think that dead leaves are falling coins; but it is an inherent and continual habit of thought, which Scott shares with the moderns in general, being, in fact, nothing else than the instinctive sense which men must have of the Divine presence, not formed into distinct belief. In the Greek it created, as we saw, the faithfully believed gods of the elements; in Dante and the mediævals, it formed the faithfully believed angelic presence: in the modern, it creates no perfect form, does not apprehend distinctly any Divine being or operation; but only a dim, slightly credited animation in the natural object, accompanied with great interest and affection for it. This feeling is quite universal with us, only varying in depth according to the greatness of the heart that holds it; and in Scott, being more than usually intense, and accompanied with infinite affection and quickness of sym-

pathy, it enables him to conquer all tendencies to the pathetic fallacy, and, instead of making Nature anywise subordinate to himself, he makes himself subordinate to *her*—follows her lead simply—does not venture to bring his own cares and thoughts into her pure and quiet presence—paints her in her simple and universal truth, adding no result of momentary passion or fancy, and appears, therefore, at first shallower than other poets, being in reality wider and healthier. "What am I?" he says continually, "that I should trouble this sincere nature with my thoughts. I happen to be feverish and depressed, and I could see a great many sad and strange things in those waves and flowers; but I have no business to see such things. Gay Greta! sweet harebells! *you* are not sad nor strange to most people; you are but bright water and blue blossoms; you shall not be anything else to me, except that I cannot help thinking you are a little alive—no one can help thinking that." And thus, as Nature is bright, serene, or gloomy, Scott takes her temper, and paints her as she is; nothing of himself being ever intruded, except that far-away Eolian tone, of which he is unconscious; and sometimes a stray syllable or two, like that about Blackford Hill, distinctly stating personal feeling, but all the more modestly for that distinctness, and for the clear consciousness that it is not the chiming brook, nor the cornfields, that are sad, but only the boy that rests by them; so returning on the instant to reflect, in all honesty, the image of Nature as she is meant by all men to be received; nor that in fine words, but in the first that come; nor with comment of far-fetched thoughts, but with easy thoughts, such as all sensible men ought to have in such places, only spoken sweetly; and evidently also with an undercurrent of more profound reflection, which here and there murmurs for a moment, and which I think, if we choose, we may continually pierce down to, and drink deeply from, but which Scott leaves us to seek, or shun, at our pleasure.

And in consequence of this unselfishness and humility, Scott's enjoyment of Nature is incomparably greater than that of any other poet I know. All the rest carry their cares to her, and begin maundering in her ears about their own

affairs. Tennyson goes out on a furzy common, and sees it is calm autumn sunshine, but it gives him no pleasure. He only remembers that it is

> Dead calm in that noble breast
> Which heaves but with the heaving deep.

He sees a thunder-cloud in the evening, and *would* have "doted and pored" on it, but cannot, for fear it should bring the ship bad weather. Keats drinks the beauty of Nature violently; but has no more real sympathy with her than he has with a bottle of claret. His palate is fine; but he "bursts joy's grape against it," gets nothing but misery, and a bitter taste of dregs, out of his desperate draught.

Byron and Shelley are nearly the same, only with less truth of perception, and even more troublesome selfishness. Wordsworth is more like Scott, and understands how to be happy, but yet cannot altogether rid himself of the sense that he is a philosopher, and ought always to be saying something wise. He has also a vague notion that Nature would not be able to get on well without Wordsworth; and finds a considerable part of his pleasure in looking at himself as well as at her. But with Scott the love is entirely humble and unselfish. "I, Scott, am nothing, and less than nothing; but these crags, and heaths, and clouds, how great they are, how lovely, how for ever to be beloved, only for their own silent, thoughtless sake!"

This pure passion for nature in its abstract being, is still increased in its intensity by the two elements above taken notice of,—the love of antiquity, and the love of colour and beautiful form, mortified in our streets, and seeking for food in the wilderness and the ruin: both feelings, observe, instinctive in Scott from his childhood, as everything that makes a man great is always.

> And well the lonely infant knew
> Recesses where the wallflower grew,
> And honeysuckle loved to crawl
> Up the lone crag and ruined wall.
> I deemed such nooks the sweetest shade
> The sun in all its round surveyed.

Not that these could have been instinctive in a child in the Middle Ages. The sentiments of a people increase or diminish in intensity from generation to generation—every disposition of the parents affecting the frame of the mind in their offspring: the soldier's child is born to be yet more a soldier, and the politician's to be still more a politician; even the slightest colours of sentiment and affection are transmitted to the heirs of life; and the crowning expression of the mind of a people is given when some infant of highest capacity, and sealed with the impress of this national character, is born where providential circumstances permit the full development of the powers it has received straight from Heaven, and the passions which it has inherited from its fathers.

This love of ancientness, and that of natural beauty, associate themselves also in Scott with the love of liberty, which was indeed at the root even of all his Jacobite tendencies in politics. For, putting aside certain predilections about landed property, and family name, and "gentlemanliness" in the club sense of the word — respecting which I do not now inquire whether they were weak or wise—the main element which makes Scott like Cavaliers better than Puritans is, that he thinks the former *free* and *masterful* as well as loyal; and the latter *formal* and *slavish*. He is loyal, not so much in respect for law, as in unselfish love for the king; and his sympathy is quite as ready for any active borderer who breaks the law, or fights the king, in what Scott thinks a generous way, as for the king himself. Rebellion of a rough, free, and bold kind he is always delighted by; he only objects to rebellion on principle and in form: bareheaded and open-throated treason he will abet to any extent, but shrinks from it in a peaked hat and starched collar: nay, politically, he only delights in kingship itself, because he looks upon it as the head and centre of liberty; and thinks that, keeping hold of a king's hand, one may get rid of the cramps and fences of law; and that the people may be governed by the whistle, as a Highland clan on the open hill-side, instead of being shut up into hurdled folds or hedged fields, as sheep or cattle left masterless.

And thus Nature becomes dear to Scott in a threefold way: dear to him, first, as containing those remains or memories of the past, which he cannot find in cities, and giving hope of Prætorian mound or knight's grave, in every green slope and shade of its desolate places;—dear, secondly, in its moorland liberty, which has for him just as high a charm as the fenced garden had for the mediæval;

> For I was wayward, bold, and wild,
> A self-willed imp—a grandame's child;
> But, half a plague, and half a jest,
> Was still endured, beloved, caressed:
> For me, thus nurtured, dost thou ask
> The classic poet's well-conned task?
> Nay, Erskine, nay. On the wild hill
> Let the wild heathbell flourish still;
> Cherish the tulip, prune the vine;
> But freely let the woodbine twine,
> And leave untrimmed the eglantine;

—and dear to him, finally, in that perfect beauty, denied alike in cities and in men, for which every modern heart had begun at last to thirst, and Scott's, in its freshness and power, of all men's, most earnestly.

And in this love of beauty, observe, that (as I said we might except) the love of *colour* is a leading element, his healthy mind being incapable of losing, under any modern false teaching, its joy in brilliancy of hue. Though not so subtle a colourist as Dante, which, under the circumstances of the age, he could not be, he depends quite as much upon colour for his power or pleasure. And, in general, if he does not mean to say much about things, the *one* character which he will give is colour, using it with the most perfect mastery and faithfulness, up to the point of possible modern perception. For instance, if he has a sea-storm to paint in a single line, he does not, as a feebler poet would probably have done, use any expression about the temper or form of the waves; does not call them angry or mountainous. He is content to strike them out with two dashes of Tintoret's favourite colours:

> *The blackening wave is edged with white;*
> To inch and rock the seamews fly.

There is no form in this. Nay, the main virtue of it is, that it gets rid of all form. The dark raging of the sea—what form has that? But out of the cloud of its darkness those lightning flashes of the foam, coming at their terrible intervals —you need no more.

Again: where he has to describe tents mingled among oaks, he says nothing about the form of either tent or tree, but only gives the two strokes of colour:

> Thousand pavilions, *white as snow*,
> *Chequered* the borough moor below,
> Oft giving way, where still there stood
> Some relics of the old oak wood,
> That darkly huge did intervene,
> *And tamed the glaring white with green.*

Again: of tents at Flodden:

> Next morn the Baron climbed the tower,
> To view, afar, the Scottish power,
> Encamped on Flodden edge.
> The white pavilions made a show,
> Like remnants of the winter snow,
> Along the dusky ridge.

Again: of trees mingled with dark rocks:

> Until, where Teith's young waters roll
> Betwixt him and a wooded knoll,
> That graced the *sable* strath with *green*,
> The chapel of St. Bride was seen.

Again: there is hardly any form, only smoke and colour, in his celebrated description of Edinburgh:

> The wandering eye could o'er it go,
> And mark the distant city glow
> With gloomy splendour red;
> For on the smoke-wreaths, huge and slow,
> That round her sable turrets flow,
> The morning beams were shed,
> And tinged them with a lustre proud,
> Like that which streaks a thunder-cloud.
> Such dusky grandeur clothed the height,
> Where the huge Castle holds its state,
> And all the steep slope down,
> Whose ridgy back heaves to the sky,
> Piled deep and massy, close and high,
> Mine own romantic town!

But northward far, with purer blaze,
On Ochil mountains fell the rays,
And as each heathy top they kissed,
It gleamed a purple amethyst.
Yonder the shores of Fife you saw;
Here Preston Bay and Berwick Law:
And, broad between them, rolled
The gallant Firth the eye might note,
Whose islands on its bosom float,
Like emeralds chased in gold.

I do not like to spoil a fine passage by italicizing it; but observe, the only hints at form, given throughout, are in the somewhat vague words, "ridgy," "massy," "close," and "high;" the whole being still more obscured by modern mystery, in its most tangible form of smoke. But the *colours* are all definite; note the rainbow band of them—gloomy or dusky red, sable (pure black), amethyst (pure purple), green, and gold—a noble chord throughout; and then, moved doubtless less by the smoky than the amethystine part of the group,

Fitz Eustace' heart felt closely pent,
The spur he to his charger lent,
And raised his bridle hand,
And, making demivolte in air,
Cried, "Where's the coward would not dare
To fight for such a land?"

I need not multiply examples: the reader can easily trace for himself, through verse familiar to us all, the force of these colour instincts. I will therefore add only two passages, not so completely known by heart as most of the poems in which they occur.

'Twas silence all. He laid him down
Where purple heath profusely strown,
And throatwort, with its azure bell,
And moss and thyme his cushion swell.
There, spent with toil, he listless eyed
The course of Greta's playful tide;
Beneath her banks, now eddying dun,
Now brightly gleaming to the sun,
As, dancing over rock and stone,
In yellow light her currents shone,
Matching in hue the favourite gem
Of Albin's mountain diadem.

Then tired to watch the current play,
He turned his weary eyes away
To where the bank opposing showed
Its huge square cliffs through shaggy wood.
One, prominent above the rest,
Reared to the sun its pale grey breast;
Around its broken summit grew
The hazel rude, and sable yew;
A thousand varied lichens dyed
Its waste and weather-beaten side;
And round its rugged basis lay,
By time or thunder rent away,
Fragments, that, from its frontlet torn,
Were mantled now by verdant thorn.

Note, first, what an exquisite chord of colour is given in the succession of this passage. It begins with purple and blue; then passes to gold, or cairngorm colour (topaz colour); then to *pale grey*, through which the yellow passes into black; and the black, through broken dyes of lichen, into green. Note, secondly,—what is indeed so manifest throughout Scott's landscape as hardly to need pointing out,—the love of rocks, and true understanding of their colours and characters, opposed as it is in every conceivable way to Dante's hatred and misunderstanding of them.

I have already traced, in various places, most of the causes of this great difference; namely, first, the ruggedness of northern temper (compare § 8 of the chapter on the Nature of Gothic in *The Stones of Venice*); then the really greater beauty of the northern rocks, as noted when we were speaking of the Apennine limestone; then the need of finding beauty among them, if it were to be found anywhere,—no well-arranged colours being any more to be seen in dress, but only in rock lichens; and, finally, the love of irregularity, liberty, and power springing up in glorious opposition to laws of prosody, fashion, and the five orders.

The other passage I have to quote is still more interesting; because it has *no form* in it *at all* except in one word (chalice), but wholly composes its imagery either of colour, or of that delicate half-believed life which we have seen to be so important an element in modern landscape:

The summer dawn's reflected hue
To purple changed Loch Katrine blue;
Mildly and soft the western breeze
Just kissed the lake, just stirred the trees;
And the pleased lake, like maiden coy,
Trembled, but dimpled not, for joy;
The mountain-shadows on her breast
Were neither broken nor at rest;
In bright uncertainty they lie,
Like future joys to Fancy's eye.
The water-lily to the light
Her chalice reared of silver bright;
The doe awoke, and to the lawn,
Begemmed with dew-drops, led her fawn;
The grey mist left the mountain-side;
The torrent showed its glistening pride;
Invisible in flecked sky,
The lark sent down her revelry;
The blackbird and the speckled thrush
Good-morrow gave from brake and bush;
In answer cooed the cushat dove
Her notes of peace, and rest, and love.

Two more considerations are, however, suggested by the above passage. The first, that the love of natural history, excited by the continual attention now given to all wild landscape, heightens reciprocally the interest of that landscape, and becomes an important element in Scott's description, leading him to finish, down to the minutest speckling of breast, and slightest shade of attributed emotion, the portraiture of birds and animals; in strange opposition to Homer's slightly named "sea-crows, who have care of the works of the sea," and Dante's singing-birds, of undefined species. Compare carefully a passage, too long to be quoted —the 2nd and 3rd stanzas of canto vi. of *Rokeby*.

The second, and the last point I have to note, is Scott's habit of drawing a slight *moral* from every scene, just enough to excuse to his conscience his want of definite religious feeling; and that this slight moral is almost always melancholy. Here he has stopped short without entirely expressing it.

The mountain shadows .
. . . . lie
Like future joys to Fancy's eye.

His completed thought would be that those future joys, like the mountain shadows, were never to be attained. It occurs fully uttered in many other places. He seems to have been constantly rebuking his own worldly pride and vanity, but never purposefully:

> The foam-globes on her eddies ride,
> Thick as the schemes of human pride
> That down life's current drive amain,
> As frail, as frothy, and as vain.
>
> Foxglove, and nightshade, side by side,
> Emblems of punishment and pride.
>
> Her dark eye flashed; she paused, and sighed,—
> "Ah, what have I to do with pride!"

And hear the thought he gathers from the sunset (noting first the Turnerian colour—as usual, its principal element):

> The sultry summer day is done.
> The western hills have hid the sun,
> But mountain peak and village spire
> Retain reflection of his fire.
> Old Barnard's towers are purple still,
> To those that gaze from Toller Hill;
> Distant and high the tower of Bowes,
> Like steel upon the anvil glows;
> And Stanmore's ridge, behind that lay,
> Rich with the spoils of parting day,
> In crimson and in gold arrayed,
> Streaks yet awhile the closing shade;
> Then slow resigns to darkening heaven
> The tints which brighter hours had given.
> Thus, aged men, full loath and slow,
> The vanities of life forego,
> And count their youthful follies o'er
> Till memory lends her light no more.

That is, as far as I remember, one of the most finished pieces of sunset he has given; and it has a woful moral; yet one which, with Scott, is inseparable from the scene.

Hark, again:

> 'Twere sweet to mark the setting day
> On Bourhope's lonely top decay;
> And, as it faint and feeble died
> On the broad lake and mountain's side,

To say, "Thus pleasures fade away;
Youth, talents, beauty, thus decay,
And leave us dark, forlorn, and grey."

And again, hear Bertram:

Mine be the eve of tropic sun:
With disk like battle-target red,
He rushes to his burning bed,
Dyes the wide wave with bloody light,
Then sinks at once; and all is night.

In all places of this kind, where a passing thought is suggested by some external scene, that thought is at once a slight and sad one. Scott's deeper moral sense is marked in the *conduct* of his stories, and in casual reflections or exclamations arising out of their plot, and therefore sincerely uttered; as that of Marmion:

Oh, what a tangled web we weave,
When first we practise to deceive!

But the reflections which are founded, not on events, but on scenes, are, for the most part, shallow, partly insincere, and, as far as sincere, sorrowful. This habit of ineffective dreaming and moralizing over passing scenes, of which the earliest type I know is given in Jaques, is, as aforesaid, usually the satisfaction made to our modern consciences for the want of a sincere acknowledgment of God in nature: and Shakspeare has marked it as the characteristic of a mind "compact of jars" (Act ii., Sc. vii., *As You Like It*). That description attaches but too accurately to all the modes which we have traced in the moderns generally, and in Scott as the first representative of them; and the question now is, what this love of landscape, so composed, is likely to lead us to, and what use can be made of it.

We began our investigation, it will be remembered, in order to determine whether landscape-painting was worth studying or not. We have now reviewed the three principal phases of temper in the civilized human race, and we find that landscape has been mostly disregarded by great men, or cast into a second place, until now; and that now it seems dear to us, partly in consequence of our faults, and partly

owing to accidental circumstances, soon, in all likelihood, to pass away: and there seems great room for question still, whether our love of it is a permanent and healthy feeling, or only a healthy crisis in a generally diseased state of mind. If the former, society will for ever hereafter be affected by its results; and Turner, the first great landscape-painter, must take a place in the history of nations corresponding in art accurately to that of Bacon in philosophy; Bacon having first opened the study of the laws of material nature, when, formerly, men had thought only of the laws of human mind; and Turner having first opened the study of the aspect of material nature, when, before, men had thought only of the aspect of the human form. Whether, therefore, the love of landscape be trivial and transient, or important and permanent, it now becomes necessary to consider. We have, I think, data enough before us for the solution of the question, and we will enter upon it, accordingly, in the following pages.

40. The Child's Attitude towards Nature.

Now, in a question of this subtle kind, relating to a period of life when self-examination is rare, and expression imperfect, it becomes exceedingly difficult to trace, with any certainty, the movements of the minds of others, nor always easy to remember those of our own. I cannot, from observation, form any decided opinion as to the extent in which this strange delight in nature influences the hearts of young persons in general; and, in stating what has passed in my own mind, I do not mean to draw any positive conclusion as to the nature of the feeling in other children; but the inquiry is clearly one in which personal experience is the only safe ground to go upon, though a narrow one; and I will make no excuse for talking about myself with reference to this subject, because, though there is much egotism in the world, it is often the last thing a man thinks of doing —and, though there is much work to be done in the world, it is often the best thing a man can do—to tell the exact

truth about the movements of his own mind; and there is this farther reason, that whatever other faculties I may or may not possess, this gift of taking pleasure in landscape I assuredly possess in a greater degree than most men; it having been the ruling passion of my life, and the reason for the choice of its field of labour.

The first thing which I remember, as an event in life, was being taken by my nurse to the brow of Friar's Crag on Derwentwater; the intense joy, mingled with awe, that I had in looking through the hollows in the mossy roots, over the crag, into the dark lake, has associated itself more or less with all twining roots of trees ever since. Two other things I remember, as, in a sort, beginnings of life; crossing Shapfells (being let out of the chaise to run up the hills), and going through Glenfarg, near Kinross, in a winter's morning, when the rocks were hung with icicles; these being culminating points in an early life of more travelling than is usually indulged to a child. In such journeyings, whenever they brought me near hills, and in all mountain ground and scenery, I had a pleasure, as early as I can remember, and continuing till I was eighteen or twenty, infinitely greater than any which has been since possible to me in anything; comparable for intensity only to the joy of a lover in being near a noble and kind mistress, but no more explicable or definable than that feeling of love itself. Only thus much I can remember, respecting it, which is important to our present subject.

First: it was never independent of associated thought. Almost as soon as I could see or hear, I had got reading enough to give me associations with all kinds of scenery; and mountains, in particular, were always partly confused with those of my favourite book, Scott's *Monastery;* so that Glenfarg and all other glens were more or less enchanted to me, filled with forms of hesitating creed about Christie of the Clint Hill, and the monk Eustace; and with a general presence of White Lady everywhere. I also generally knew, or was told by my father and mother, such simple facts of history as were necessary to give more definite and justifiable association to other scenes which chiefly interested

me, such as the ruins of Lochleven and Kenilworth; and thus my pleasure in mountains or ruins was never, even in earliest childhood, free from a certain awe and melancholy, and general sense of the meaning of death, though, in its principal influence, entirely exhilarating and gladdening.

Secondly: it was partly dependent on contrast with a very simple and unamused mode of general life. I was born in London, and accustomed, for two or three years, to no other prospect than that of the brick walls over the way; had no brothers nor sisters, nor companions; and though I could always make myself happy in a quiet way, the beauty of the mountains had an additional charm of change and adventure which a country-bred child would not have felt.

Thirdly: there was no definite religious feeling mingled with it. I partly believed in ghosts and fairies; but supposed that angels belonged entirely to the Mosaic dispensation, and cannot remember any single thought or feeling connected with them. I believed that God was in heaven, and could hear me and see me; but this gave me neither pleasure nor pain, and I seldom thought of it at all. I never thought of nature as God's work, but as a separate fact or existence.

Fourthly: it was entirely unaccompanied by powers of reflection or invention. Every fancy that I had about nature was put into my head by some book; and I never reflected about anything till I grew older; and then, the more I reflected, the less nature was precious to me: I could then make myself happy, by thinking, in the dark, or in the dullest scenery; and the beautiful scenery became less essential to my pleasure.

Fifthly: it was, according to its strength, inconsistent with every evil feeling, with spite, anger, covetousness, discontent, and every other hateful passion; but would associate itself deeply with every just and noble sorrow, joy, or affection. It had not, however, always the power to repress what was inconsistent with it; and, though only after stout contention, might at last be crushed by what it had partly repressed. And as it only acted by setting one impulse against another, though it had much power in moulding the character, it had

hardly any in strengthening it; it formed temperament, but never instilled principle; it kept me generally good-humoured and kindly, but could not teach me perseverance or self-denial: what firmness or principle I had was quite independent of it; and it came itself nearly as often in the form of a temptation as of a safeguard, leading me to ramble over hills when I should have been learning lessons, and lose days in reveries which I might have spent in doing kindnesses.

Lastly: although there was no definite religious sentiment mingled with it, there was a continual perception of Sanctity in the whole of nature, from the slightest thing to the vastest;—an instinctive awe, mixed with delight; an indefinable thrill, such as we sometimes imagine to indicate the presence of a disembodied spirit. I could only feel this perfectly when I was alone; and then it would often make me shiver from head to foot with the joy and fear of it, when after being some time away from hills, I first got to the shore of a mountain river, where the brown water circled among the pebbles, or when I saw the first swell of distant land against the sunset, or the first low broken wall, covered with mountain moss. I cannot in the least *describe* the feeling; but I do not think this is my fault, nor that of the English language, for, I am afraid, no feeling *is* describable. If we had to explain even the sense of bodily hunger to a person who had never felt it, we should be hard put to it for words; and this joy in nature seemed to me to come of a sort of heart-hunger, satisfied with the presence of a Great and Holy Spirit. These feelings remained in their full intensity till I was eighteen or twenty, and then, as the reflective and practical power increased, and the "cares of this world" gained upon me, faded gradually away, in the manner described by Wordsworth in his *Intimations of Immortality.*

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41. Modern Improvements.

THE great mechanical impulses of the age, of which most of us are so proud, are a mere passing fever, half-speculative,

half-childish. People will discover at last that royal roads to anything can no more be laid in iron than they can in dust; that there are, in fact, no royal roads to anywhere worth going to; that if there were, it would that instant cease to be worth going to—I mean, so far as the things to be obtained are in any way estimable in terms of *price*. For there are two classes of precious things in the world: those that God gives us for nothing—sun, air, and life (both mortal life and immortal); and the secondarily precious things which He gives us for a price: these secondarily precious things, worldly wine and milk, can only be bought for definite money; they never can be cheapened. No cheating nor bargaining will ever get a single thing out of nature's "establishment" at half-price. Do we want to be strong?—we must work. To be hungry?—we must starve. To be happy?—we must be kind. To be wise?—we must look and think. No changing of place at a hundred miles an hour, nor making of stuffs a thousand yards a minute, will make us one whit stronger, happier, or wiser. There was always more in the world than men could see, walked they ever so slowly; they will see it no better for going fast. And they will at last, and soon too, find out that their grand inventions for conquering (as they think) space and time, do, in reality, conquer nothing; for space and time are, in their own essence, unconquerable, and besides did not want any sort of conquering; they wanted *using*. A fool always wants to shorten space and time: a wise man wants to lengthen both. A fool wants to kill space and kill time: a wise man, first to gain them, then to animate them. Your railroad, when you come to understand it, is only a device for making the world smaller: and as for being able to talk from place to place, that is, indeed, well and convenient; but suppose you have, originally, nothing to say.[1] We shall be obliged at last to confess, what we should long ago have known, that the really precious things are thought and sight, not pace. It does a bullet no good to go fast;

[1] The light-outspeeding telegraph
Bears nothing on its beam.

EMERSON.

and a man, if he be truly a man, no harm to go slow; for his glory is not at all in going, but in being.

"Well; but railroads and telegraphs are so useful for communicating knowledge to savage nations." Yes, if you have any to give them. If you know nothing *but* railroads, and can communicate nothing but aqueous vapour and gunpowder—what then? But if you have any other thing than those to give, then the railroad is of use only because it communicates that other thing; and the question is—what that other thing may be. Is it religion? I believe if we had really wanted to communicate that, we could have done it in less than 1800 years, without steam. Most of the good religious communication that I remember, has been done on foot; and it cannot be easily done faster than at foot pace. Is it science? But what science—of motion, meat, and medicine? Well; when you have moved your savage, and dressed your savage, fed him with white bread, and shown him how to set a limb—what next? Follow out that question. Suppose every obstacle overcome; give your savage every advantage of civilization to the full; suppose that you have put the Red Indian in tight shoes; taught the Chinese how to make Wedgwood's ware, and to paint it with colours that will rub off; and persuaded all Hindoo women that it is more pious to torment their husbands into graves than to burn themselves at the burial—what next? Gradually, thinking on from point to point, we shall come to perceive that all true happiness and nobleness are near us, and yet neglected by us; and that till we have learned how to be happy and noble we have not much to tell, even to Red Indians. The delights of horse-racing and hunting, of assemblies in the night instead of the day, of costly and wearisome music, of costly and burdensome dress, of chagrined contention for place or power, or wealth, or the eyes of the multitude; and all the endless occupation without purpose, and idleness without rest, of our vulgar world, are not, it seems to me, enjoyments we need be ambitious to communicate. And all real and wholesome enjoyments possible to man have been just as possible to him, since first he was made of the earth, as they are now; and they

are possible to him chiefly in peace. To watch the corn grow, and the blossoms set; to draw hard breath over ploughshare or spade; to read, to think, to love, to hope, to pray—these are the things that make men happy; they have always had the power of doing these, they never *will* have power to do more. The world's prosperity or adversity depends upon our knowing and teaching these few things: but upon iron, or glass, or electricity, or steam, in no wise.

And I am Utopian and enthusiastic enough to believe, that the time will come when the world will discover this. It has now made its experiments in every possible direction but the right one; and it seems that it must, at last, try the right one, in a mathematical necessity. It has tried fighting, and preaching, and fasting, buying and selling, pomp and parsimony, pride and humiliation—every possible manner of existence in which it could conjecture there was any happiness or dignity; and all the while, as it bought, sold, and fought, and fasted, and wearied itself with policies, and ambitions, and self-denials, God had placed its real happiness in the keeping of the little mosses of the way-side, and of the clouds of the firmament. Now and then a wearied king, or a tormented slave, found out where the true kingdoms of the world were, and possessed himself, in a furrow or two of garden ground, of a truly infinite dominion. But the world would not believe their report, and went on trampling down the mosses, and forgetting the clouds, and seeking happiness in its own way, until, at last, blundering and late, came natural science; and in natural science not only the observation of things, but the finding out of new uses for them. Of course the world, having a choice left to it, went wrong as usual, and thought that these mere material uses were to be the sources of its happiness. It got the clouds packed into iron cylinders, and made them carry its wise self at their own cloud pace. It got weavable fibres out of the mosses, and made clothes for itself, cheap and fine—here was happiness at last. To go as fast as the clouds, and manufacture everything out of anything—here was paradise, indeed!

VOLUME IV.

42. The Tower of Calais Church.

THE essence of picturesque character has been already defined[1] to be a sublimity not inherent in the nature of the thing, but caused by something external to it; as the ruggedness of a cottage roof possesses something of a mountain aspect, not belonging to the cottage as such. And this sublimity may be either in mere external ruggedness, and other visible character, or it may lie deeper, in an expression of sorrow and old age, attributes which are both sublime; not a dominant expression, but one mingled with such familiar and common characters as prevent the object from becoming perfectly pathetic in its sorrow, or perfectly venerable in its age.

For instance, I cannot find words to express the intense pleasure I have always in first finding myself, after some prolonged stay in England, at the foot of the old tower of Calais church. The large neglect, the noble unsightliness of it; the record of its years written so visibly, yet without sign of weakness or decay; its stern wasteness and gloom, eaten away by the Channel winds, and overgrown with the bitter sea grasses; its slates and tiles all shaken and rent, and yet not falling; its desert of brickwork full of bolts, and holes, and ugly fissures, and yet strong, like a bare brown rock; its carelessness of what any one thinks or feels about it, putting forth no claim, having no beauty nor desirableness, pride, nor grace; yet neither asking for pity; not, as ruins are, useless and piteous, feebly or fondly garrulous of better days; but useful still, going through its own daily work, as some old

[1] *Seven Lamps of Architecture*, chap. vi., § 12.

fisherman beaten grey by storm, yet drawing his daily nets: so it stands, with no complaint about its past youth, in blanched and meagre massiveness and serviceableness, gathering human souls together underneath it; the sound of its bells for prayer still rolling through its rents; and the grey peak of it seen far across the sea, principal of the three that rise above the waste of surfy sand and hillocked shore—the lighthouse for life, and the belfry for labour, and this for patience and praise.

I cannot tell the half of the strange pleasures and thoughts that come about me at the sight of that old tower; for, in some sort, it is the epitome of all that makes the Continent of Europe interesting, as opposed to new countries; and, above all, it completely expresses that agedness in the midst of active life which binds the old and the new into harmony. We, in England, have our new street, our new inn, our green shaven lawn, and our piece of ruin emergent from it—a mere *specimen* of the middle ages put on a bit of velvet carpet to be shown, which, but for its size, might as well be on a museum shelf at once, under cover. But, on the Continent, the links are unbroken between the past and present, and in such use as they can serve for, the greyheaded wrecks are suffered to stay with men; while, in unbroken line, the generations of spared buildings are seen succeeding each in its place. And thus in its largeness, in its permitted evidence of slow decline, in its poverty, in its absence of all pretence, of all show and care for outside aspect, that Calais tower has an infinite of symbolism in it, all the more striking because usually seen in contrast with English scenes expressive of feelings the exact reverse of these.

And I am sorry to say that the opposition is most distinct in that noble carelessness as to what people think of it. Once, on coming from the Continent, almost the first inscription I saw in my native English was this:

TO LET,

A GENTEEL HOUSE, UP THIS ROAD.

And it struck me forcibly, for I had not come across the idea of gentility, among the upper limestones of the Alps,

for seven months; nor do I think that the Continental nations in general *have* the idea. They would have advertised a "pretty" house, or a "large" one, or a "convenient" one; but they could not, by any use of the terms afforded by their several languages, have got at the English "genteel." Consider, a little, all the meanness that there is in that epithet, and then see, when next you cross the Channel, how scornful of it that Calais spire will look.

Of which spire the largeness and age are also opposed exactly to the chief appearances of modern England, as one feels them on first returning to it; that marvellous smallness both of houses and scenery, so that a ploughman in the valley has his head on a level with the tops of all the hills in the neighbourhood; and a house is organized into complete establishment, parlour, kitchen, and all, with a knocker to its door, and a garret window to its roof, and a bow to its second story,[1] on a scale of twelve feet wide by fifteen high, so that three such at least would go into the granary of an ordinary Swiss cottage: and also our serenity of perfection, our peace of conceit, everything being done that vulgar minds can conceive as wanting to be done; the spirit of well-principled housemaids everywhere, exerting itself for perpetual propriety and renovation, so that nothing is old, but only "old-fashioned," and contemporary, as it were, in date and impressiveness only with last year's bonnets. Abroad, a building of the eighth or tenth century stands ruinous in the open street; the children play round it, the peasants heap their corn in it, the buildings of yesterday nestle about it, and fit their new stones into its rents, and tremble in sympathy as it trembles. No one wonders at it, or thinks of it as separate, and of another time; we feel the ancient world to be a real thing, and one with the new: antiquity is no dream; it is rather the children playing about the old stones that are the dream. But all is continuous; and the words "from generation to generation" understandable there. Whereas here we have a living present, consisting merely of what is "fashionable" and "old-fashioned;" and

[1] The principal street of Canterbury has some curious examples of this *tininess*.

a past, of which there are no vestiges; a past which peasant or citizen can no more conceive; all equally far away; Queen Elizabeth as old as Queen Boadicea, and both incredible. At Verona we look out of Can Grande's window to his tomb; and if he does not stand beside us, we feel only that he is in the grave instead of the chamber—not that he is *old*, but that he might have been beside us last night. But in England the dead are dead to purpose. One cannot believe they ever were alive, or anything else than what they are now—names in school-books.

Then that spirit of trimness. The smooth paving-stones; the scraped, hard, even, rutless roads; the neat gates and plates, and essence of border and order, and spikiness and spruceness. Abroad, a country-house has some confession of human weakness and human fates about it. There are the old grand gates still, which the mob pressed sore against at the Revolution, and the strained hinges have never gone so well since; and the broken greyhound on the pillar—still broken—better so: but the long avenue is gracefully pale with fresh green, and the courtyard bright with orange trees; the garden is a little run to waste—since Mademoiselle was married nobody cares much about it; and one range of apartments is shut up—nobody goes into them since Madame died. But with us, let who will be married or die, we neglect nothing. All is polished and precise again next morning; and whether people are happy or miserable, poor or prosperous, still we sweep the stairs of a Saturday.[1]

Now, I have insisted long on this English character, because I want the reader to understand thoroughly the opposite element of the noble picturesque; its expression, namely, of *suffering*, of *poverty*, or *decay*, nobly endured by unpretending strength of heart. Nor only unpretending, but unconscious. If there be visible pensiveness in the building, as in a ruined abbey, it becomes, or claims to become, beautiful; but the picturesqueness is in the uncon-

[1] This, however, is of course true only of insignificant duties, neces sary for appearance' sake. Serious duties, necessary for kindness' sake, must be pretermitted in any domestic affliction, under pain of shocking the English public.

scious suffering—the look that an old labourer has, not knowing that there is anything pathetic in his grey hair, and withered arms, and sunburnt breast; and thus there are the two extremes, the consciousness of pathos in the confessed ruin, which may or may not be beautiful, according to the kind of it; and the entire denial of all human calamity and care, in the swept proprieties and neatnesses of English modernism: and, between these, there is the unconscious confession of the facts of distress and decay, in by-words; the world's hard work being gone through all the while, and no pity asked for, nor contempt feared. And this is the expression of that Calais spire, and of all picturesque things, in so far as they have mental or human expression at all.

I say, in so far as they have mental expression, because their merely outward delightfulness—that which makes them pleasant in painting, or, in the literal sense, picturesque—is their actual variety of colour and form. A broken stone has necessarily more various forms in it than a whole one; a bent roof has more various curves in it than a straight one; every excrescence or cleft involves some additional complexity of light and shade, and every stain of moss on eaves or wall adds to the delightfulness of colour. Hence, in a completely picturesque object, as an old cottage or mill, there are introduced, by various circumstances not essential to it, but, on the whole, generally somewhat detrimental to it as cottage or mill, such elements of sublimity—complex light and shade, varied colour, undulatory form, and so on—as can generally be found only in noble natural objects, woods, rocks, or mountains. This sublimity, belonging in a parasitical manner to the building, renders it, in the usual sense of the word, "picturesque."

Now, if this outward sublimity be sought for by the painter, without any regard for the real nature of the thing, and without any comprehension of the pathos of character hidden beneath, it forms the low school of the surface-picturesque; that which fills ordinary drawing-books and scrap-books, and employs, perhaps, the most popular living landscape painters of France, England, and Germany. But if these same outward characters be sought for in sub-

ordination to the inner character of the object, every source of pleasurableness being refused which is incompatible with that, while perfect sympathy is felt at the same time with the object as to all that it tells of itself in those sorrowful by-words, we have the school of true or noble picturesque; still distinguished from the school of pure beauty and sublimity, because, in its subjects, the pathos and sublimity are all *by the way*, as in Calais old spire—not inherent, as in a lovely tree or mountain; while it is distinguished still more from the schools of the lower picturesque by its tender sympathy, and its refusal of all sources of pleasure inconsistent with the perfect nature of the thing to be studied.

The reader will only be convinced of the broad scope of this law by careful thought, and comparison of picture with picture; but a single example will make the principle of it clear to him.

On the whole, the first master of the lower picturesque, among our living artists, is Clarkson Stanfield; his range of art being, indeed, limited by his pursuit of this character. I take, therefore, a windmill, forming the principal subject in his drawing of Brittany, near Dol (engraved in the *Coast Scenery*), Fig. 1, Plate XIX., and beside it I place a windmill, which forms also the principal subject in Turner's study of the Lock, in the *Liber Studiorum*. At first sight I dare say the reader may like Stanfield's best; and there is, indeed, a great deal more in it to attract liking. Its roof is nearly as interesting in its ruggedness as a piece of the stony peak of a mountain, with a châlet built on its side; and it is exquisitely varied in swell and curve. Turner's roof, on the contrary, is a plain, ugly gable—a windmill roof, and nothing more. Stanfield's sails are twisted into most effective wrecks, as beautiful as pine bridges over Alpine streams; only they do not look as if they had ever been serviceable windmill sails; they are bent about in cross and awkward ways, as if they were warped or cramped; and their timbers look heavier than necessary. Turner's sails have no beauty about them like that of Alpine bridges; but they have the exact switchy sway of the sail that is always straining against the wind; and the timbers form clearly the lightest possible

framework for the canvass, thus showing the essence of windmill sail. Then the clay wall of Stanfield's mill is as beautiful as a piece of chalk cliff, all worn into furrows by the rain, coated with mosses, and rooted to the ground by a heap of crumbled stone, embroidered with grass and creeping plants. But this is not a serviceable state for a windmill to be in. The essence of a windmill, as distinguished from all other mills, is, that it should turn round, and be a spinning thing, ready always to face the wind; as light, therefore, as possible, and as vibratory; so that it is in no wise good for it to approximate itself to the nature of chalk cliffs.

Now observe how completely Turner has chosen his mill so as to mark this great fact of windmill nature; how high he has set it; how slenderly he has supported it; how he has built it all of wood; how he has bent the lower planks so as to give the idea of the building lapping over the pivot on which it rests inside; and how, finally, he has insisted on the great leverage of the beam behind it, while Stanfield's lever looks more like a prop than a thing to turn the roof with. And he has done all this fearlessly, though none of these elements of form are pleasant ones in themselves, but tend, on the whole, to give a somewhat mean and spider-like look to the principal feature in his picture; and then, finally, because he could not get the windmill dissected, and show us the real heart and centre of the whole, behold, he has put a pair of old millstones, *lying outside*, at the bottom of it. These—the first cause and motive of all the fabric—laid at its foundation; and beside them the cart which is to fulfil the end of the fabric's being, and take home the sacks of flour.

So far of what each painter chooses to draw. But do not fail also to consider the spirit in which it is drawn. Observe, that though all this ruin has befallen Stanfield's mill, Stanfield is not in the least sorry for it. On the contrary, he is delighted, and evidently thinks it the most fortunate thing possible. The owner is ruined, doubtless, or dead; but his mill forms an admirable object in our view of Brittany. So far from being grieved about it, we will make it our principal

light; if it were a fruit-tree in spring-blossom, instead of a desolate mill, we could not make it whiter or brighter; we illume our whole picture with it, and exult over its every rent as a special treasure and possession.

Not so Turner. *His* mill is still serviceable; but, for all that, he feels somewhat pensive about it. It is a poor property, and evidently the owner of it has enough to do to get his own bread out from between its stones. Moreover, there is a dim type of all melancholy human labour in it—catching the free winds, and setting them to turn grindstones. It is poor work for the winds; better, indeed, than drowning sailors or tearing down forests, but not their proper work of marshalling the clouds, and bearing the wholesome rains to the place where they are ordered to fall, and fanning the flowers and leaves when they are faint with heat. Turning round a couple of stones, for the mere pulverization of human food, is not noble work for the winds. So, also, of all low labour to which one sets human souls. It is better than no labour; and, in a still higher degree, better than destructive wandering of imagination; but yet, that grinding in the darkness, for mere food's sake, must be melancholy work enough for many a living creature. All men have felt it so; and this grinding at the mill, whether it be breeze or soul that is set to it, we cannot much rejoice in. Turner has no joy of his mill. It shall be dark against the sky, yet proud, and on the hill-top; not ashamed of its labour, and brightened from beyond, the golden clouds stooping over it, and the calm summer sun going down behind, far away, to his rest.

Now in all this observe how the higher condition of art (for I suppose the reader will feel, with me, that Turner's *is* the highest) depends upon largeness of sympathy. It is mainly because the one painter has communion of heart with his subject, and the other only casts his eyes upon it feelinglessly, that the work of the one is greater than that of the other. And, as we think farther over the matter, we shall see that this is indeed the eminent cause of the difference between the lower picturesque and the higher. For, in a certain sense, the lower picturesque ideal is eminently a

heartless one: the lover of it seems to go forth into the world in a temper as merciless as its rocks. All other men feel some regret at the sight of disorder and ruin. He alone delights in both; it matters not of what. Fallen cottage—desolate villa—deserted village—blasted heath—mouldering castle—to him, so that they do but show jagged angles of stone and timber, all are sights equally joyful. Poverty, and darkness, and guilt, bring in their several contributions to his treasury of pleasant thoughts. The shattered window, opening into black and ghastly rents of wall, the foul rag or straw wisp stopping them, the dangerous roof, decrepit floor and stair, ragged misery or wasting age of the inhabitants—all these conduce, each in due measure, to the fulness of his satisfaction. What is it to him that the old man has passed his seventy years in helpless darkness and untaught waste of soul? The old man has at last accomplished his destiny, and filled the corner of a sketch, where something of an unshapely nature was wanting. What is it to him that the people fester in that feverish misery in the low quarter of the town, by the river? Nay, it is much to him. What else were they made for? what could they have done better? The black timbers, and the green water, and the soaking wrecks of boats, and the torn remnants of clothes hung out to dry in the sun;—truly the fever-struck creatures, whose lives have been given for the production of these materials of effect, have not died in vain.[1]

[1] I extract from my private diary a passage bearing somewhat on the matter in hand: "Amiens, 11th May, 18—. I had a happy walk here this afternoon, down among the branching currents of the Somme; it divides into five or six—shallow, green, and not over-wholesome; some quite narrow and foul, running beneath clusters of fearful houses, reeling masses of rotten timber; and a few mere stumps of pollard willow sticking out of the banks of soft mud, only retained in shape of bank by being shored up with timbers; and boats like paper boats, nearly as thin at least, for the costermongers to paddle about in among the weeds, the water soaking through the lath bottoms, and floating the dead leaves from the vegetable-baskets with which they were loaded. Miserable little back yards, opening to the water, with steep stone steps down to it, and little platforms for the ducks; and separate duck staircases, composed of a sloping board with cross bits of wood leading to the ducks' doors; and sometimes a flower-pot or two on them, or even a

43. The Sanctity of Colour.

THE ascertainment of the sanctity of colour is not left to human sagacity. It is distinctly stated in Scripture. I have before alluded to the sacred chord of colour (blue, purple, and scarlet, with white and gold) as appointed in the Tabernacle; this chord is the fixed base of all colouring with the workmen of every great age; the purple and scarlet will be found constantly employed by noble painters, in various unison, to the exclusion in general of pure crimson; it is the harmony described by Herodotus as used in the battlements of Ecbatana, and the invariable base of all beautiful missal-painting; the mistake continually made by modern restorers, in supposing the purple to be a faded crimson, and substituting full crimson for it, being instantly fatal to the whole work, as, indeed, the slightest modification of any hue in a perfect colour-harmony must always be.[1] In this chord the scarlet is the powerful colour, and is on the whole the most perfect representation of abstract colour which exists; blue being in a certain degree associated with shade, yellow with light, and scarlet, as absolute *colour*, standing alone. Accordingly, we find it used, together with cedar wood, hyssop, and running water, as an emblem of

flower—one group, of wallflowers and geraniums, curiously vivid, being seen against the darkness of a dyer's backyard, who had been dyeing black all day, and all was black in his yard but the flowers, and they fiery and pure; the water by no means so, but still working its way steadily over the weeds, until it narrowed into a current strong enough to turn two or three mill-wheels, one working against the side of an old flamboyant Gothic church, whose richly traceried buttresses sloped into the filthy stream;—all exquisitely picturesque, and no less miserable. We delight in seeing the figures in these boats pushing them about the bits of blue water, in Prout's drawings; but as I looked to-day at the unhealthy face and melancholy mien of the man in the boat pushing his load of peats along the ditch, and of the people, men as well as women, who sat spinning gloomily at the cottage doors, I could not help feeling how many suffering persons must pay for my picturesque subject and happy walk."

[1] Hence the intense absurdity of endeavouring to "restore" the colour of ancient buildings by the hands of ignorant colourists, as at the Crystal Palace.

purification, in *Leviticus*, xiv. 4, and other places, and so used not merely as representative of the colour of blood, since it was also to be dipped in the actual blood of a living bird. So that the cedar wood for its perfume, the hyssop for its searchingness, the water for its cleansing, and the scarlet for its kindling or enlightening, are all used as tokens of sanctification;[1] and it cannot be with any force alleged, in opposition to this definite appointment, that scarlet is used incidentally to illustrate the stain of sin—"though thy sins be as scarlet"—any more than it could be received as a diminution of the authority for using snow-whiteness as a type of purity, that Gehazi's leprosy is described as being "white as snow." An incidental image has no authoritative meaning, but a stated ceremonial appointment has; besides, we have the reversed image given distinctly in Prov., xxxi.: "She is not afraid of the snow for her household, for all her household are clothed with *scarlet*." And, again: "Ye daughters of Israel, weep over Saul, who clothed you in scarlet, with other delights." So, also, the arraying of the mystic Babylon in purple and scarlet may be interpreted exactly as we choose; either, by those who think colour sensual, as an image of earthly pomp and guilt, or, by those who think it sacred, as an image of assumed or pretended sanctity. It is possible the two meanings may be blended, and the idea may be that the purple and fine linen of Dives are worn in hypocritical semblance of the purple and fine linen of the high priest, being, nevertheless, themselves, in all cases typical of all beauty and purity. I hope, however, to be able some day to enter farther into these questions with respect to the art of illumination; meantime, the facts bearing on our immediate subject may be briefly recapitulated. All men, completely organized and justly tempered, enjoy colour; it is meant for the perpetual comfort and delight of the human heart; it is richly bestowed on the highest works of creation, and the eminent sign and seal of perfection in them; being associated with *life* in the human body, with *light* in the sky, with *purity* and hardness in the earth—

[1] The redeemed Rahab bound for a sign a *scarlet* thread in the window. Compare *Canticles*, iv. 3.

death, night, and pollution of all kinds being colourless. And although if form and colour be brought into complete opposition,[1] so that it should be put to us as a matter of stern choice whether we should have a work of art all of form, without colour (as an Albert Dürer's engraving), or all of colour, without form (as an imitation of mother-of-pearl), form is beyond all comparison the more precious of the two; and in explaining the essence of objects, form is essential, and colour more or less accidental; yet if colour be introduced at all, it is necessary that, whatever else may be wrong, *that* should be right: just as, though the music of a song may not be so essential to its influence as the meaning of the words, yet if the music be given at all, *it* must be right, or its discord will spoil the words; and it would be better, of the two, that the words should be indistinct, than the notes false. Hence, as I have said elsewhere, the business of a painter is to paint. If he can colour, he is

[1] The inconsistency between perfections of colour and form, which I have had to insist upon in other places, is exactly like that between articulation and harmony. We cannot have the richest harmony with the sharpest and most audible articulation of words: yet good singers will articulate clearly; and the perfect study of the science of music will conduct to a fine articulation; but the study of pronunciation will not conduct to, nor involve, that of harmony. So, also, though, as said farther on, *subtle* expression can be got without colour, perfect expression never can; for the colour of the face is a part of its expression. How often has that scene between Francesca di Rimini and her lover been vainly attempted by sculptors, simply because they did not observe that the main note of expression in it was in the fair sheet-lightning—fading and flaming through the cloud of passion!

> Per più fiate gli occhi ci sospinse
> Quella lettura, *e scolorocci il viso.*

And, of course, in landscape, colour is the principal source of expression. Take one melancholy chord from the close of Crabbe's *Patron:*

> Cold grew the foggy morn; the day was brief,
> Loose on the cherry hung the crimson leaf.
> The dew dwelt ever on the herb; the woods
> Roared with strong blasts; with mighty showers, the floods:
> All green was vanished, save of pine and yew
> That still displayed their melancholy hue;
> Save the green holly, with its berries red
> And the green moss that o'er the gravel spread.

a painter, though he can do nothing else; if he cannot colour, he is no painter, though he may do everything else. But it is, in fact, impossible, if he can colour, but that he should be able to do more; for a faithful study of colour will always give power over form, though the most intense study of form will give no power over colour. The man who can see all the greys, and reds, and purples in a peach, will paint the peach rightly round, and rightly altogether; but the man who has only studied its roundness, may not see its purples and greys, and if he does not, will never get it to look like a peach; so that great power over colour is always a sign of large general art-intellect. Expression of the most subtle kind can be often reached by the slight studies of caricaturists; sometimes elaborated by the toil of the dull, and sometimes by the sentiment of the feeble; but to colour well requires real talent and earnest study, and to colour perfectly is the rarest and most precious power an artist can possess. Every other gift may be erroneously cultivated, but this will guide to all healthy, natural, and forcible truth; the student may be led into folly by philosophers, and into falsehood by purists; but he is always safe, if he holds the hand of a colourist.

44. In Defence of Fog.

An English painter justifiably loves fog, because he is born in a foggy country; as an Italian painter justifiably loves clearness, because he is born in a comparatively clear country. I have heard a traveller familiar with the East complain of the effect in a picture of Copley Fielding's, that "it was such very bad weather." But it ought not to be bad weather to the English. Our green country depends for its life on those kindly rains and floating swirls of cloud; we ought, therefore, to love them, and to paint them.

But there is no need to rest my defence on this narrow English ground. The fact is, that though the climates of the South and East may be *comparatively* clear, they are no more absolutely clear than our own northern air; and that

wherever a landscape-painter is placed, if he paints faithfully, he will have continually to paint effects of mist. Intense clearness, whether in the North after or before rain, or in some moments of twilight in the South, is always, as far as I am acquainted with natural phenomena, a *notable* thing. Mist of some sort, or mirage, or confusion of light, or of cloud, are the general facts; the distance may vary in different climates at which the effects of mist begin, but they are always present; and therefore, in all probability it is meant that we should enjoy them.

Nor does it seem to me in any wise difficult to understand why they should be thus appointed for enjoyment. In former parts of this work we were able to trace a certain delightfulness in every visible feature of natural things which was typical of any great spiritual truth; surely, therefore, we need not wonder now, that mist and all its phenomena have been made delightful to us, since our happiness as thinking beings must depend on our being content to accept only partial knowledge, even in those matters which chiefly concern us. If we insist upon perfect intelligibility and complete declaration in every moral subject, we shall instantly fall into misery of unbelief. Our whole happiness and power of energetic action depend upon our being able to breathe and live in the cloud; content to see it opening here and closing there; rejoicing to catch, through the thinnest films of it, glimpses of stable and substantial things; but yet perceiving a nobleness even in the concealment, and rejoicing that the kindly veil is spread where the untempered light might have scorched us, or the infinite clearness wearied.

And I believe that the resentment of this interference of the mist is one of the forms of proud error which are too easily mistaken for virtues. To be content in utter darkness and ignorance is indeed unmanly, and therefore we think that to love light and seek knowledge must always be right. Yet (as in all matters before observed), wherever *pride* has any share in the work, even knowledge and light may be ill pursued. Knowledge is good, and light is good, yet man perished in seeking knowledge, and the moths perish in

seeking light; and if we, who are crushed before the moth, will not accept such mystery as is needful for us, we shall perish in like manner. But, accepted in humbleness, it instantly becomes an element of pleasure; and I think that every rightly constituted mind ought to rejoice, not so much in knowing anything clearly, as in feeling that there is infinitely more which it cannot know. None but proud or weak men would mourn over this, for we may always know more if we choose, by working on; but the pleasure is, I think, to humble people, in knowing that the journey is endless, the treasure inexhaustible—watching the cloud still march before them with its summitless pillar, and being sure that, to the end of time and to the length of eternity, the mysteries of its infinity will still open farther and farther, their dimness being the sign and necessary adjunct of their inexhaustibleness. I know there are an evil mystery and a deathful dimness—the mystery of the great Babylon—the dimness of the sealed eye and soul; but do not let us confuse these with the glorious mystery of the things which the angels "desire to look into," or with the dimness which, even before the clear eye and open soul, still rests on sealed pages of the eternal volume.

And going down from this great truth to the lower truths which are types of it in smaller matters, we shall find, that as soon as people try honestly to see all they can of anything, they come to a point where a noble dimness begins. They see more than others; but the consequence of their seeing more is, that they feel they cannot see all; and the more intense their perception, the more the crowd of things which they *partly* see will multiply upon them; and their delight may at last principally consist in dwelling on this cloudy part of their prospect, somewhat casting away or aside what to them has become comparatively common, but is perhaps the sum and substance of all that other people see in the thing, for the utmost subtleties and shadows and glancings of it cannot be caught but by the most practised vision. And as a delicate ear rejoices in the slighter and more modulated passages of sound which to a blunt ear are utterly monotonous in their quietness, or unintelligible in their complication,

so, when the eye is exquisitely keen and clear, it is fain to rest on grey films of shade, and wandering rays of light, and intricacies of tender form, passing over hastily, as unworthy or commonplace, what to a less educated sense appears the whole of the subject.[1] In painting, this progress of the eye is marked always by one consistent sign—its sensibility, namely, to effects of *gradation* in light and colour, and habit of looking for them, rather even than for the signs of the essence of the subject. It will, indeed, see more of that essence than is seen by other eyes; and its choice of the points to be seized upon will be always regulated by that special sympathy which we have above examined as the motive of the Turnerian picturesque; but yet, the more it is cultivated, the more of light and colour it will perceive, the less of substance.

Thus, when the eye is quite uncultivated, it sees that a man is a man, and a face is a face, but has no idea what shadows or lights fall upon the form or features. Cultivate it to some degree of artistic power, and it will then see shadows distinctly, but only the more vigorous of them. Cultivate it still farther, and it will see light within light, and shadow within shadow, and will continually refuse to rest in what it had already discovered, that it may pursue what is more removed and more subtle, until at last it comes to give its chief attention and display its chief power on gradations which to an untrained faculty are partly matters of indifference, and partly imperceptible. That these subtle gradations have indeed become matters of primal importance to it, may be ascertained by observing that they are the things it will last part with, as the object retires into distance; and that, though this distance may become so great as to render the real nature of the object quite undiscernible, the gradations of light upon it will not be lost.

[1] And yet, all these intricacies will produce for it another whole; as simple and natural as the child's first conception of the thing; only more comprehensive.

45. The Firmament.

THE account given of the stages of Creation in the first chapter of Genesis, is in every respect clear and intelligible to the simplest reader, except in the statement of the work of the second day. I suppose that this statement is passed over by careless readers without an endeavour to understand it; and contemplated by simple and faithful readers as a sublime mystery, which was not intended to be understood. But there is no mystery in any other part of the chapter, and it seems to me unjust to conclude that any was intended here.

And the passage ought to be peculiarly interesting to us, as being the first in the Bible in which the *heavens* are named, and the only one in which the word "Heaven," all important as that word is to our understanding of the most precious promises of Scripture, receives a definite explanation.

Let us, therefore, see whether, by a little careful comparison of the verse with other passages in which the word occurs, we may not be able to arrive at as clear an understanding of this portion of the chapter as of the rest.

In the first place, the English word "Firmament" itself is obscure and useless; because we never employ it but as a synonym of heaven; it conveys no other distinct idea to us; and the verse, though from our familiarity with it we imagine that it possesses meaning, has in reality no more point or value than if it were written "God said, let there be a something in the midst of the waters, and God called the something Heaven."

But the marginal reading, "Expansion," has definite value; and the statement that "God said, let there be an expansion in the midst of the waters, and God called the expansion Heaven" has an apprehensible meaning.

Accepting this expression as the one intended, we have next to ask what expansion there is, between two waters, describable by the term Heaven. Milton adopts the term

"expanse;"[1] but he understands it of the whole volume of the air which surrounds the earth. Whereas, so far as we can tell, there is no water beyond the air, in the fields of space; and the whole expression of division of waters from waters is thus rendered valueless.

Now, with respect to this whole chapter, we must remember always that it is intended for the instruction of all mankind, not for the learned reader only; and that, therefore, the most simple and natural interpretation is the likeliest in general to be the true one. An unscientific reader knows little about the manner in which the volume of the atmosphere surrounds the earth; but I imagine that he could hardly glance at the sky when rain was falling in the distance, and see the level line of the bases of the clouds from which the shower descended, without being able to attach an instant and easy meaning to the words "Expansion in the midst of the waters." And if, having once seized this idea, he proceeded to examine it more accurately, he would perceive at once, if he had ever noticed *any*thing of the nature of clouds, that the level line of their bases did indeed most severely and stringently divide "waters from waters," that is to say, divide water in its collective and tangible state, from water in its divided and aërial state; or the waters which *fall* and *flow*, from those which *rise* and *float*. Next, if we try this interpretation in the theological sense of the word *Heaven*, and examine whether the clouds are spoken of as God's dwelling-place, we find God going before the Israelites in a pillar of cloud; revealing Himself in a cloud on Sinai; appearing in a cloud on the mercy seat, filling the Temple of Solomon with the cloud when its dedication is accepted; appearing in a great cloud to Ezekiel; ascending into a cloud before the eyes of the disciples on Mount Olivet; and in like manner returning to Judgment. "Behold, he cometh with clouds, and every eye shall see him." "Then shall they see

> God made
> The firmament, expanse of liquid, pure,
> Transparent, elemental air, diffused
> In circuit to the uttermost convex
> Of this great round.
>
> *Paradise Lost*, book vii. [264–8]

the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven, with power and great glory."[1] While farther, the "clouds" and "heavens" are used as interchangeable words in those Psalms which most distinctly set forth the power of God: "He bowed the heavens also, and came down; he made darkness pavilions round about him, dark waters, and thick clouds of the skies." And, again: "Thy mercy, O Lord, is in the heavens, and thy faithfulness reacheth unto the clouds." And, again: "His excellency is over Israel, and his strength is in the clouds." Again: "The clouds poured out water, the skies sent out a sound, the voice of thy thunder was in the heaven." Again: "Clouds and darkness are round about him, righteousness and judgment are the habitation of his throne; the heavens declare his righteousness, and all the people see his glory."

In all these passages the meaning is unmistakable, if they possess definite meaning at all. We are too apt to take them merely for sublime and vague imagery, and therefore gradually to lose the apprehension of their life and power. The expression "He bowed the heavens," for instance, is, I suppose, received by most readers as a magnificent hyperbole, having reference to some peculiar and fearful manifestation of God's power to the writer of the Psalm in which the words occur. But the expression either has plain meaning, or it has *no* meaning. Understand by the term "Heavens" the compass of infinite space around the earth, and the expression, "bowed the heavens," however sublime, is wholly without meaning; infinite space cannot be bent or bowed. But understand by the "Heavens" the veil of clouds above the earth, and the expression is neither hyperbolical nor obscure; it is pure, plain, and accurate truth, and it describes God, not as revealing Himself in any peculiar way to David, but doing what He is still doing before our own eyes day by day. By accepting the words in their simple sense, we are thus led to apprehend the immediate presence

[1] The reader may refer to the following texts, which it is needless to quote: *Exod.*, xiii. 21; xvi. 10; xix. 9; xxiv. 16; xxxiv. 5; *Levit.*, xvi. 2; *Num.*, x. 34; *Judges*, v. 4; 1 *Kings*, viii. 10; *Ezek.*, i. 4; *Dan.*, vii. 13; *Matt.*, xxiv. 30; 1 *Thess.*, iv. 17; *Rev.*, i. 7.

of the Deity, and His purpose of manifesting Himself as near us whenever the storm-cloud stoops upon its course; while by our vague and inaccurate acceptance of the words we remove the idea of His presence far from us, into a region which we can neither see nor know; and gradually, from the close realization of a living God who "maketh the clouds his chariot," we refine and explain ourselves into dim and distant suspicion of an inactive God, inhabiting inconceivable places, and fading into the multitudinous formalisms of the laws of Nature.

All errors of this kind—and in the present day we are in constant and grievous danger of falling into them—arise from the originally mistaken idea that man can, "by searching, find out God—find out the Almighty to perfection;" that is to say, by help of courses of reasoning and accumulations of science, apprehend the nature of the Deity in a more exalted and more accurate manner than in a state of comparative ignorance; whereas it is clearly necessary, from the beginning to the end of time, that God's way of revealing Himself to His creatures should be a *simple* way, which *all* those creatures may understand. Whether taught or untaught, whether of mean capacity or enlarged, it is necessary that communion with their Creator should be possible to all; and the admission to such communion must be rested, not on their having a knowledge of astronomy, but on their having a human soul. In order to render this communion possible, the Deity has stooped from His throne, and has not only, in the person of the Son, taken upon Him the veil of our human *flesh*, but, in the person of the Father, taken upon Him the veil of our human *thoughts*, and permitted us, by His own spoken authority, to conceive him simply and clearly as a loving Father and Friend; a being to be walked with and reasoned with; to be moved by our entreaties, angered by our rebellion, alienated by our coldness, pleased by our love, and glorified by our labour; and, finally, to be beheld in immediate and active presence in all the powers and changes of creation. This conception of God, which is the child's, is evidently the only one which can be universal, and therefore the only one which *for us* can be true. The

moment that, in our pride of heart, we refuse to accept the condescension of the Almighty, and desire Him, instead of stooping to hold our hands, to rise up before us into His glory—we hoping that by standing on a grain of dust or two of human knowledge higher than our fellows, we may behold the Creator as He rises—God takes us at our word; He rises, into His own invisible and inconceivable majesty; He goes forth upon the ways which are not our ways, and retires into the thoughts which are not our thoughts; and we are left alone. And presently we say in our vain hearts, "There is no God."

I would desire, therefore, to receive God's account of His own creation as under the ordinary limits of human knowledge and imagination it would be received by a simply minded man; and, finding that the "heavens and the earth" are spoken of always as having something like equal relation to each other ("thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them"), I reject at once all idea of the term "Heavens" being intended to signify the infinity of space inhabited by countless worlds; for between those infinite heavens and the particle of sand, which not the earth only, but the sun itself, with all the solar system, is in relation to them, no relation of equality or comparison could be inferred. But I suppose the heavens to mean that part of creation which holds equal companionship with our globe; I understand the "rolling of those heavens together as a scroll" to be an equal and relative destruction with the "melting of the elements in fervent heat;"[1] and I under-

[1] Compare also *Job*, xxxvi. 29: "The spreading of the clouds, and the noise of his *tabernacle*," and xxxviii. 33: "Knowest thou the ordinances of heaven? canst thou set the dominion thereof in the earth? canst thou lift up thy voice to the clouds?"

Observe that in the passage of Addison's well-known hymn:

> The spacious firmament on high,
> With all the blue, ethereal sky,
> And spangled heavens, a shining frame,
> Their great Original proclaim—

the writer has clearly the true distinction in his mind; he does not use his words, as we too often accept them, in vain tautology. By the *spacious* firmament he means the clouds, using the word spacious to

stand the making the firmament to signify that, so far as man is concerned, most magnificent ordinance of the clouds; the ordinance, that as the great plain of waters was formed on the face of the earth, so also a plain of waters should be stretched along the height of air, and the face of the cloud answer the face of the ocean; and that this upper and heavenly plain should be of waters, as it were, glorified in their nature, no longer quenching the fire, but now bearing fire in their own bosoms; no longer murmuring only when the winds raise them or rocks divide, but answering each other with their own voices from pole to pole; no longer restrained by established shores, and guided through unchanging channels, but going forth at their pleasure like the armies of the angels, and choosing their encampments upon the heights of the hills; no longer hurried downwards for ever, moving but to fall, nor lost in the lightless accumulation of the abyss, but covering the east and west with the waving of their wings, and robing the gloom of the farther infinite with a vesture of divers colours, of which the threads are purple and scarlet, and the embroideries flame.

This, I believe, is the ordinance of the firmament; and it seems to me that in the midst of the material nearness of these heavens God means us to acknowledge His own immediate presence as visiting, judging, and blessing us. "The earth shook, the heavens also dropped, at the presence of God." "He doth set his bow in the cloud," and thus renews, in the sound of every drooping swathe of rain, His promises of everlasting love. "In them hath he set a *tabernacle* for the sun;" whose burning ball, which without the firmament would be seen but as an intolerable and scorching circle in the blackness of vacuity, is by that firmament surrounded with gorgeous service, and tempered by mediatorial ministries; by the firmament of clouds the golden pavement is spread for his chariot wheels at morning; by the firmament of clouds the temple is built for his presence to fill with light

mark the true meaning of the Hebrew term; the blue *ethereal* sky is the real air or ether, blue above the clouds; the heavens are the starry space, for which he uses this word, less accurately, indeed, than the others, but as the only one available for his meaning.

at noon; by the firmament of clouds the purple veil is closed at evening round the sanctuary of his rest; by the mists of the firmament his implacable light is divided, and its separated fierceness appeased into the soft blue that fills the depth of distance with its bloom, and the flush with which the mountains burn as they drink the overflowing of the dayspring. And in this tabernacling of the unendurable sun with men, through the shadows of the firmament, God would seem to set forth the stooping of His own majesty to men, upon the *throne* of the firmament. As the Creator of all the worlds, and the Inhabiter of eternity, we cannot behold Him; but, as the Judge of the earth and the Preserver of men, those heavens are indeed His dwelling-place. "Swear not, neither by heaven, for it is God's throne; nor by the earth, for it is his footstool." And all those passings to and fro of fruitful shower and grateful shade, and all those visions of silver palaces built about the horizon, and voices of moaning winds and threatening thunders, and glories of coloured robe and cloven ray, are but to deepen in our hearts the acceptance, and distinctness, and dearness of the simple words "Our Father, which art in heaven."

46. The Function of Mountains.

It was, indeed, absolutely necessary that such eminences should be created, in order to fit the earth in any wise for human habitation; for without mountains the air could not be purified, nor the flowing of the rivers sustained, and the earth must have become for the most part desert plain, or stagnant marsh. But the feeding of the rivers and the purifying of the winds are the least of the services appointed to the hills. To fill the thirst of the human heart for the beauty of God's working—to startle its lethargy with the deep and pure agitation of astonishment—are their higher missions. They are as a great and noble architecture; first giving shelter, comfort, and rest; and covered also with mighty sculpture and painted legend. It is impossible to

examine in their connected system the features of even the most ordinary mountain scenery, without concluding that it has been prepared in order to unite as far as possible, and in the closest compass, every means of delighting and sanctifying the heart of man. "As far as *possible;*" that is, as far as is consistent with the fulfilment of the sentence of condemnation on the whole earth. Death must be upon the hills; and the cruelty of the tempests smite them, and the briar and thorn spring up upon them: but they so smite, as to bring their rocks into the fairest forms; and so spring, as to make the very desert blossom as the rose. Even among our own hills of Scotland and Cumberland, though often too barren to be perfectly beautiful, and always too low to be perfectly sublime, it is strange how many deep sources of delight are gathered into the compass of their glens and vales; and how, down to the most secret cluster of their far-away flowers, and the idlest leap of their straying streamlets, the whole heart of Nature seems thirsting to give, and still to give, shedding forth her everlasting beneficence with a profusion so patient, so passionate, that our utmost observance and thankfulness are but, at last, neglect of her nobleness, and apathy to her love. But among the true mountains of the greater orders the Divine purpose of appeal at once to all the faculties of the human spirit becomes still more manifest. Inferior hills ordinarily interrupt, in some degree, the richness of the valleys at their feet; the grey downs of southern England, and treeless coteaux of central France, and grey swells of Scottish moor, whatever peculiar charm they may possess in themselves, are at least destitute of those which belong to the woods and fields of the lowlands. But the great mountains *lift* the lowlands *on their sides.* Let the reader imagine, first, the appearance of the most varied plain of some richly cultivated country; let him imagine it dark with graceful woods, and soft with deepest pastures; let him fill the space of it, to the utmost horizon, with innumerable and changeful incidents of scenery and life; leading pleasant streamlets through its meadows, strewing clusters of cottages beside their banks, tracing sweet foot-paths through its avenues, and animating its fields with

happy flocks, and slow wandering spots of cattle; and when he has wearied himself with endless imagining, and left no space without some loveliness of its own, let him conceive all this great plain, with its infinite treasures of natural beauty and happy human life, gathered up in God's hands from one edge of the horizon to the other, like a woven garment; and shaken into deep falling folds, as the robes droop from a king's shoulders; all its bright rivers leaping into cataracts along the hollows of its fall, and all its forests rearing themselves aslant against its slopes, as a rider rears himself back when his horse plunges; and all its villages nestling themselves into the new windings of its glens; and all its pastures thrown into steep waves of greensward, dashed with dew along the edges of their folds, and sweeping down into endless slopes, with a cloud here and there lying quietly, half on the grass, half in the air; and he will have as yet, in all this lifted world, only the foundation of one of the great Alps. And whatever is lovely in the lowland scenery becomes lovelier in this change—the trees which grew heavily and stiffly from the level line of plain assume strange curves of strength and grace as they bend themselves against the mountain side; they breathe more freely, and toss their branches more carelessly as each climbs higher, looking to the clear light above the topmost leaves of its brother tree: the flowers which on the arable plain fell before the plough, now find out for themselves unapproachable places, where year by year they gather into happier fellowship, and fear no evil; and the streams which in the level land crept in dark eddies by unwholesome banks, now move in showers of silver, and are clothed with rainbows, and bring health and life wherever the glance of their waves can reach.

And although this beauty seems at first, in its wildness, inconsistent with the service of man, it is, in fact, more necessary to his happy existence than all the level and easily subdued land which he rejoices to possess. It seems almost an insult to the reader's intelligence to ask him to dwell (as if they could be doubted) on the *uses* of the hills; and yet so little, until lately, have those uses been understood, that, in the seventeenth century, one of the most enlightened of

the religious men of his day (Fleming), himself a native of a mountain country, casting about for some reason to explain to himself the existence of mountains, and prove their harmony with the general perfectness of the providential government of creation, can light upon this reason only, "They are inhabited by the beasts."

It may not, therefore, even at this day, be altogether profitless or unnecessary to review briefly the nature of the three great offices which mountain ranges are appointed to fulfil, in order to preserve the health and increase the happiness of mankind. Their first use is of course to give motion to water. Every fountain and river, from the inch-deep streamlet that crosses the village lane in trembling clearness, to the massy and silent march of the everlasting multitude of waters in Amazon or Ganges, owe their play, and purity, and power, to the ordained elevations of the earth. Gentle or steep, extended or abrupt, some determined slope of the earth's surface is of course necessary, before any wave can so much as overtake one sedge in its pilgrimage; and how seldom do we enough consider, as we walk beside the margins of our pleasant brooks, how beautiful and wonderful is that ordinance, of which every blade of grass that waves in their clear water is a perpetual sign; that the dew and rain fallen on the face of the earth shall find no resting-place; shall find, on the contrary, fixed channels traced for them, from the ravines of the central crests down which they roar in sudden ranks of foam, to the dark hollows beneath the banks of lowland pasture, round which they must circle slowly among the stems and beneath the leaves of the lilies; paths prepared for them, by which, at some appointed rate of journey, they must evermore descend, sometimes slow and sometimes swift, but never pausing; the daily portion of the earth they have to glide over marked for them at each successive sunrise, the place which has known them knowing them no more, and the gateways of guarding mountains opened for them in cleft and chasm, none letting them in their pilgrimage; and, from far off, the great heart of the sea calling them to itself! Deep calleth unto deep. I know not which of the two is the more wonderful—that calm, gradated,

invisible slope of the champaign land, which gives motion to the stream, or that passage cloven for it through the ranks of hill, which, necessary for the health of the land immediately around them, would yet, unless so supernaturally divided, have fatally intercepted the flow of the waters from far-off countries. When did the great spirit of the river first knock at those adamantine gates? When did the porter open to it, and cast his keys away for ever, lapped in whirling sand? I am not satisfied—no one should be satisfied—with that vague answer—the river cut its way. Not so. The river *found* its way. I do not see that rivers, in their own strength, can do much in cutting their way; they are nearly as apt to choke their channels up, as to carve them out. Only give a river some little sudden power in a valley, and see how it will use it. Cut itself a bed? Not so, by any means, but fill up its bed, and look for another, in a wild, dissatisfied, inconsistent manner. Any way, rather than the old one, will better please it; and even if it is banked up and forced to keep to the old one, it will not deepen, but do all it can to raise it, and leap out of it. And although, wherever water has a steep fall, it will swiftly cut itself a bed deep into the rock or ground, it will not, when the rock is hard, cut a wider channel than it actually needs; so that if the existing river beds, through ranges of mountain, had in reality been cut by the streams, they would be found, wherever the rocks are hard, only in the form of narrow and profound ravines—like the well-known channel of Niagara, below the fall; not in that of extended valleys. And the actual work of true mountain rivers, though often much greater in proportion to their body of water than that of the Niagara, is quite insignificant when compared with the area and depth of the valleys through which they flow; so that, although in many cases it appears that those larger valleys have been excavated at earlier periods by more powerful streams, or by the existing stream in a more powerful condition, still the great fact remains always equally plain, and equally admirable, that, whatever the nature and duration of the agencies employed, the earth was so shaped at first as to direct the currents of its rivers in the manner most healthy

and convenient for man. The valley of the Rhone may, though it is not likely, have been in great part excavated in early time by torrents a thousand times larger than the Rhone; but it could not have been excavated at all, unless the mountains had been thrown at first into two chains, between which the torrents were set to work in a given direction. And it is easy to conceive how, under any less beneficent dispositions of their masses of hill, the continents of the earth might either have been covered with enormous lakes, as parts of North America actually are covered; or have become wildernesses of pestiferous marsh; or lifeless plain, upon which the water would have dried as it fell, leaving them for great part of the year desert. Such districts do exist, and exist in vastness: the *whole* earth is not prepared for the habitation of man; only certain small portions are prepared for him—the houses, as it were, of the human race, from which they are to look abroad upon the rest of the world, not to wonder or complain that it is not all house, but to be grateful for the kindness of the admirable building, in the house itself, as compared with the rest. It would be as absurd to think it an evil that all the world is not fit for us to inhabit, as to think it an evil that the globe is no larger than it is. As much as we shall ever need is evidently assigned to us for our dwelling-place; the rest, covered with rolling waves or drifting sands, fretted with ice or crested with fire, is set before us for contemplation in an uninhabitable magnificence; and that part which we are enabled to inhabit owes its fitness for human life chiefly to its mountain ranges, which, throwing the superfluous rain off as it falls, collect it in streams or lakes, and guide it into given places, and in given directions; so that men can build their cities in the midst of fields which they know will be always fertile, and establish the lines of their commerce upon streams which will not fail.

Nor is this giving of motion to water to be considered as confined only to the surface of the earth. A no less important function of the hills is in directing the flow of the fountains and springs, from subterranean reservoirs. There is no miraculous springing up of water out of the ground at

our feet; but every fountain and well is supplied from a reservoir among the hills, so placed as to involve some slight fall or pressure, enough to secure the constant flowing of the stream. And the incalculable blessing of the power given to us in most valleys, of reaching by excavation some point whence the water will rise to the surface of the ground in perennial flow, is entirely owing to the concave disposition of the beds of clay or rock raised from beneath the bosom of the valley into ranks of enclosing hills.

The second great use of mountains is to maintain a constant change in the currents and nature of the *air*. Such change would, of course, have been partly caused by differences in soils and vegetation, even if the earth had been level; but to a far less extent than it is now by the chains of hills, which, exposing on one side their masses of rock to the full heat of the sun (increased by the angle at which the rays strike on the slope), and on the other casting a soft shadow for leagues over the plains at their feet, divide the earth not only into districts, but into climates, and cause perpetual currents of air to traverse their passes, and ascend or descend their ravines, altering both the temperature and nature of the air as it passes, in a thousand different ways; moistening it with the spray of their waterfalls, sucking it down and beating it hither and thither in the pools of their torrents, closing it within clefts and caves, where the sunbeams never reach, till it is as cold as November mists, then sending it forth again to breathe softly across the slopes of velvet fields, or to be scorched among sunburnt shales and grassless crags; then drawing it back in moaning swirls through clefts of ice, and up into dewy wreaths above the snow-fields; then piercing it with strange electric darts and flashes of mountain fire, and tossing it high in fantastic storm-cloud, as the dried grass is tossed by the mower, only suffering it to depart at last, when chastened and pure, to refresh the faded air of the far-off plains.

The third great use of mountains is to cause perpetual change in the *soils* of the earth. Without such provision the ground under cultivation would in a series of years become exhausted, and require to be upturned laboriously by

the hand of man. But the elevations of the earth's surface provide for it a perpetual renovation. The higher mountains suffer their summits to be broken into fragments and to be cast down in sheets of massy rock, full, as we shall see presently, of every substance necessary for the nourishment of plants: these fallen fragments are again broken by frost, and ground by torrents, into various conditions of sand and clay—materials which are distributed perpetually by the streams farther and farther from the mountain's base. Every shower which swells the rivulets enables their waters to carry certain portions of earth into new positions, and exposes new banks of ground to be mined in their turn. That turbid foaming of the angry water—that tearing down of bank and rock along the flanks of its fury—are no disturbances of the kind course of nature; they are beneficent operations of laws necessary to the existence of man and to the beauty of the earth. The process is continued more gently, but not less effectively, over all the surface of the lower undulating country; and each filtering thread of summer rain which trickles through the short turf of the uplands is bearing its own appointed burden of earth to be thrown down on some new natural garden in the dingles below.

And it is not, in reality, a degrading, but a true, large, and ennobling view of the mountain ranges of the world, if we compare them to heaps of fertile and fresh earth, laid up by a prudent gardener beside his garden beds, whence, at intervals, he casts on them some scattering of new and virgin ground. That which we so often lament as convulsion or destruction is nothing else than the momentary shaking of the dust from the spade. The winter floods, which inflict a temporary devastation, bear with them the elements of succeeding fertility; the fruitful field is covered with sand and shingle in momentary judgment, but in enduring mercy; and the great river, which chokes its mouth with marsh, and tosses terror along its shore, is but scattering the seeds of the harvests of futurity, and preparing the seats of unborn generations.

I have not spoken of the local and peculiar utilities of mountains: I do not count the benefit of the supply of

summer streams from the moors of the higher ranges—of the various medicinal plants which are nested among their rocks—of the delicate pasturage which they furnish for cattle [1]—of the forests in which they bear timber for shipping—the stones they supply for building, or the ores of metal which they collect into spots open to discovery, and easy for working. All these benefits are of a secondary or a limited nature. But the three great functions which I have just described—those of giving motion and change to water, air, and earth—are indispensable to human existence; they are operations to be regarded with as full a depth of gratitude as the laws which bid the tree bear fruit, or the seed multiply itself in the earth. And thus those desolate and threatening ranges of dark mountain, which, in nearly all ages of the world, men have looked upon with aversion or with terror, and shrunk back from as if they were haunted by perpetual images of death, are, in reality, sources of life and happiness far fuller and more beneficent than all the bright fruitfulnesses of the plain. The valleys only feed; the mountains feed, and guard, and strengthen us. We take our ideas of fearfulness and sublimity alternately from the mountains and the sea; but we associate them unjustly. The sea wave, with all its beneficence, is yet devouring and terrible; but the silent wave of the blue mountain is lifted towards heaven in a stillness of perpetual mercy; and the one surge, unfathomable in its darkness, the other, unshaken in its faithfulness, for ever bear the seal of their appointed symbolism:

> "Thy *righteousness* is like the great mountains:
> Thy *judgments* are a great deep."

47. Man and the Mountains.

A LIMESTONE landscape is apt to be dull and cold in general tone, with some aspect even of barrenness. The sandstones are much richer in vegetation: there are, perhaps, no scenes

[1] The *highest* pasturages (at least so say the Savoyards) being always the best and richest.

in our own island more interesting than the wooded dingles which traverse them, the red rocks glowing out on either side, and shelving down into the pools of their deep brown rivers, as at Jedburgh and Langholme ; the steep oak copses climbing the banks, the paler plumes of birch shaking themselves free into the light of the sky above, and the few arches of the monastery where the fields in the glen are greenest, or the stones of the border tower where its cliffs are steepest, rendering both field and cliff a thousandfold more dear to the heart and sight. But deprived of such associations, and compared in their mere natural beauty with the ravines of the central ranges, there can be no question but that even the loveliest passages of such scenery are imperfect and poor in foreground colour. And at first there would seem to be an unfairness in this, unlike the usual system of compensation which so often manifests itself throughout nature. The higher mountains have their scenes of power and vastness, their blue precipices and cloud-like snows: why should they also have the best and fairest colours given to their foreground rocks, and overburden the human mind with wonder ; while the less majestic scenery, tempting us to the observance of details for which amidst the higher mountains we had no admiration left, is yet, in the beauty of those very details, as inferior as it is in scale of magnitude?

I believe the answer must be, simply, that it is not good for man to live among what is most beautiful ; that he is a creature incapable of satisfaction by anything upon earth ; and that to allow him habitually to possess, in any kind whatsoever, the utmost that earth can give, is the surest way to cast him into lassitude or discontent.

If the most exquisite orchestral music could be continued without a pause for a series of years, and children were brought up and educated in the room in which it was perpetually resounding, I believe their enjoyment of music, or understanding of it, would be very small. And an accurately parallel effect seems to be produced upon the powers of contemplation, by the redundant and ceaseless loveliness of the high mountain districts. The faculties are paralyzed by the abundance, and cease, as we before noticed of the imagina-

tion, to be capable of excitement, except by other subjects of interest than those which present themselves to the eye. So that it is, in reality, better for mankind that the forms of their common landscape should offer no violent stimulus to the emotions—that the gentle upland, browned by the bending furrows of the plough, and the fresh sweep of the chalk down, and the narrow winding of the copse-clad dingle, should be more frequent scenes of human life than the Arcadias of cloud-capped mountain or luxuriant vale; and that, while humbler (though always infinite) sources of interest are given to each of us around the homes to which we are restrained for the greater part of our lives, these mightier and stranger glories should become the objects of adventure—at once the cynosures of the fancies of childhood, and themes of the happy memory, and the winter's tale of age.

Nor is it always that the inferiority is felt. For, so natural is it to the human heart to fix itself in hope rather than in present possession, and so subtle is the charm which the imagination casts over what is distant or denied, that there is often a more touching power in the scenes which contain far-away promise of something greater than themselves, than in those which exhaust the treasures and powers of Nature in an unconquerable and excellent glory, leaving nothing more to be by the fancy pictured, or pursued.

I do not know that there is a district in the world more calculated to illustrate this power of the expectant imagination, than that which surrounds the city of Fribourg in Switzerland, extending from it towards Berne. It is of grey sandstone, considerably elevated, but presenting no object of striking interest to the passing traveller; so that, as it is generally seen in the course of a hasty journey from the Bernese Alps to those of Savoy, it is rarely regarded with any other sensation than that of weariness, all the more painful because accompanied with reaction from the high excitement caused by the splendour of the Bernese Oberland. The traveller, footsore, feverish, and satiated with glacier and precipice, lies back in the corner of the diligence, perceiving little more than that the road is winding and

hilly, and the country through which it passes cultivated, and tame. Let him, however, only do this tame country the justice of staying in it a few days, until his mind has recovered its tone, and take one or two long walks through its fields, and he will have other thoughts of it. It is, as I said, an undulating district of grey sandstone, never attaining any considerable height, but having enough of the mountain spirit to throw itself into continual succession of bold slope and dale; elevated, also, just far enough above the sea to render the pine a frequent forest tree along its irregular ridges. Through this elevated tract the river cuts its way in a ravine some five or six hundred feet in depth, which winds for leagues between the gentle hills, unthought of, until its edge is approached; and then suddenly, through the boughs of the firs, the eye perceives, beneath, the green and gliding stream, and the broad walls of sandstone cliff that form its banks; hollowed out where the river leans against them, at its turns, into perilous overhanging, and, on the other shore, at the same spots, leaving little breadths of meadow between them and the water, half overgrown with thicket, deserted in their sweetness, inaccessible from above, and rarely visited by any curious wanderers along the hardly traceable footpath which struggles for existence beneath the rocks. And there the river ripples, and eddies, and murmurs in an utter solitude. It is passing through the midst of a thickly peopled country; but never was a stream so lonely. The feeblest and most far-away torrent among the high hills has its companions: the goats browse beside it; and the traveller drinks from it, and passes over it with his staff; and the peasant traces a new channel for it down to his mill-wheel. But this stream has no companions: it flows on in an infinite seclusion, not secret nor threatening, but a quietness of sweet daylight and open air—a broad space of tender and deep desolateness, drooped into repose out of the midst of human labour and life; the waves plashing lowly, with none to hear them; and the wild birds building in the boughs, with none to fray them away; and the soft, fragrant herbs rising, and breathing, and fading, with no hand to gather them—and yet all bright and bare to

the clouds above, and to the fresh fall of the passing sunshine and pure rain.

But above the brows of those scarped cliffs, all is in an instant changed. A few steps only beyond the firs that stretch their branches, angular, and wild, and white, like forks of lightning, into the air of the ravine, and we are in an arable country of the most perfect richness; the swathes of its corn glowing and burning from field to field; its pretty hamlets all vivid with fruitful orchards and flowery gardens, and goodly with steep-roofed storehouse and barn; its well-kept, hard, park-like roads rising and falling from hillside to hillside, or disappearing among brown banks of moss, and thickets of the wild raspberry and rose; or gleaming through lines of tall trees, half glade, half avenue, where the gate opens, or the gateless path turns trustedly aside, unhindered, into the garden of some statelier house, surrounded in rural pride with its golden hives, and carved granaries, and irregular domain of latticed and espaliered cottages, gladdening to look upon in their delicate homeliness—delicate, yet, in some sort, rude; not like our English homes—trim, laborious, formal, irreproachable in comfort; but with a peculiar carelessness and largeness in all their detail, harmonizing with the outlawed loveliness of their country. For there is an untamed strength even in all that soft and habitable land. It is, indeed, gilded with corn and fragrant with deep grass, but it is not subdued to the plough or to the scythe. It gives at its own free will—it seems to have nothing wrested from it nor conquered in it. It is not redeemed from desertness, but unrestrained in fruitfulness—a generous land, bright with capricious plenty, and laughing from vale to vale in fitful fulness, kind and wild; nor this without some sterner element mingled in the heart of it. For along all its ridges stand the dark masses of innumerable pines, taking no part in its gladness, asserting themselves for ever as fixed shadows, not to be pierced or banished, even in the intensest sunlight; fallen flakes and fragments of the night, stayed in their solemn squares in the midst of all the rosy bendings of the orchard boughs, and yellow effulgence of the harvest, and tracing themselves in black network and motionless

fringes against the blanched blue of the horizon in its saintly clearness. And yet they do not sadden the landscape, but seem to have been set there chiefly to show how bright everything else is round them; and all the clouds look of purer silver, and all the air seems filled with a whiter and more living sunshine, where they are pierced by the sable points of the pines; and all the pastures look of more glowing green, where they run up between the purple trunks; and the sweet field footpaths skirt the edges of the forest for the sake of its shade, sloping up and down about the slippery roots, and losing themselves every now and then hopelessly among the violets, and ground ivy, and brown sheddings of the fibrous leaves; and, at last, plunging into some open aisle where the light, through the distant stems, shows that there is a chance of coming out again on the other side; and coming out, indeed, in a little while, from the scented darkness, into the dazzling air and marvellous landscape, that stretches still farther and farther in new wilfulnesses of grove and garden, until, at last, the craggy mountains of the Simmenthal rise out of it, sharp into the rolling of the southern clouds.

I believe, for general development of human intelligence and sensibility, country of this kind is about the most perfect that exists. A richer landscape, as that of Italy, enervates, or causes wantonness; a poorer contracts the conceptions, and hardens the temperament of both mind and body; and one more curiously or prominently beautiful deadens the sense of beauty. Even what is here of attractiveness—far exceeding, as it does, that of most of the thickly peopled districts of the temperate zone—seems to act harmfully on the poetical character of the Swiss; but take its inhabitants all in all, as with deep love and stern penetration they are painted in the works of their principal writer, Gotthelf, and I believe we shall not easily find a peasantry which would completely sustain comparison with them.

But be this as it may, it is certain that the compact coherent rocks are appointed to form the greatest part of the earth's surface, and by their utility, and easily changed and governed qualities, to tempt man to dwell among them;

being, however, in countries not definitely mountainous, usually covered to a certain depth by those beds of loose gravel and sand to which we agreed to give the name of diluvium.

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48. On Curvature.

THE reader will, perhaps, here ask why, if both straight and curved lines are necessary, one should be considered more beautiful than the other. Exactly as we consider light beautiful and darkness ugly, in the abstract, though both are essential to all beauty. Darkness mingled with colour gives the delight of its depth or power; even pure blackness, in spots or chequered patterns, is often exquisitely delightful; and yet we do not therefore consider, in the abstract, blackness to be beautiful.

Just in the same way straightness mingled with curvature, that is to say, the close approximation of part of any curve to a straight line, gives to such curve all its spring, power, and nobleness: and even perfect straightness, limiting curves, or opposing them, is often pleasurable: yet, in the abstract, straightness is always ugly, and curvature always beautiful.

Thus, in the accompanying figure, the eye will instantly prefer the semicircle to the straight line; the trefoil (composed of three semicircles) to the triangle; and the cinqfoil to the pentagon. The mathematician may perhaps feel an opposite preference; but he must be conscious that he does so under the influence of feelings quite different from those with which he would admire (if he ever does admire) a picture or statue; and that if he could free himself from those associations, his judgment of the relative agreeableness of the forms would be altered. He may rest assured that, by the natural instinct of the eye and thought, the preference is given instantly, and always, to the curved form;

and that no human being of unprejudiced perceptions would desire to substitute triangles for the ordinary shapes of clover leaves, or pentagons for those of potentillas.

All curvature, however, is not equally agreeable; but the examination of the laws which render one curve more beautiful than another, would, if carried out to any completeness, alone require a volume. The following few examples will be enough to put the reader in the way of pursuing the subject for himself.

Take any number of lines, *a b*, *b c*, *c d*, &c., fig. 1, page 261, bearing any fixed proportion to each other. In this figure, *b c* is one-third longer than *a b*, and *c d* than *b c*; and so on. Arrange them in succession, keeping the inclination, or angle, which each makes with the preceding one always the same. Then a curve drawn through the extremities of the lines will be a beautiful curve; for it is governed by consistent laws; every part of it is connected by those laws with every other, yet every part is different from every other; and the mode of its construction implies the possibility of its continuance to infinity; it would never return upon itself though prolonged for ever. These characters must be possessed by every perfectly beautiful curve.

If we make the difference between the component or measuring lines less, as in fig. 2, page 261, in which each line is longer than the preceding one only by a fifth, the curve will be more contracted and less beautiful. If we enlarge the difference, as in fig. 3, page 261, in which each line is double the preceding one, the curve will suggest a more rapid proceeding into infinite space, and will be more beautiful. Of two curves, the same in other respects, that which suggests the quickest attainment of infinity is always the most beautiful.

These three curves being all governed by the same general law, with a difference only in dimensions of lines, together with all the other curves so constructible, varied as they may be infinitely, either by changing the lengths of line, or the inclination of the lines to each other, are considered by mathematicians only as one curve, having this peculiar character about it, different from that of most other infinite lines, that any portion of it is a magnified repetition of the

preceding portion; that is to say, the portion between *e* and *g* is precisely what that between *c* and *e* would look, if seen through a lens which magnified somewhat more than twice.

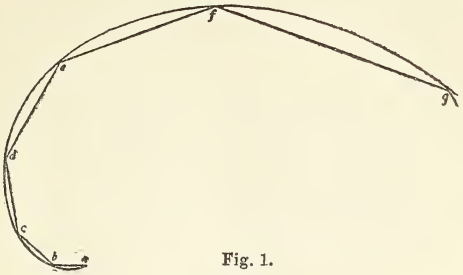


Fig. 1.

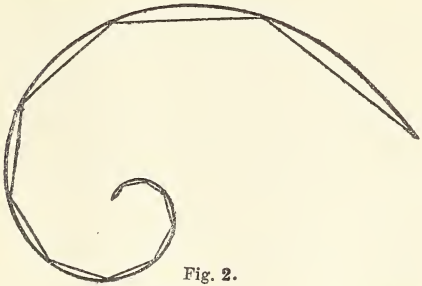


Fig. 2.

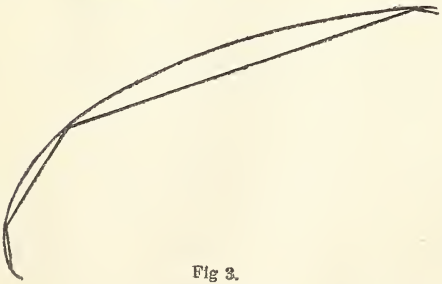
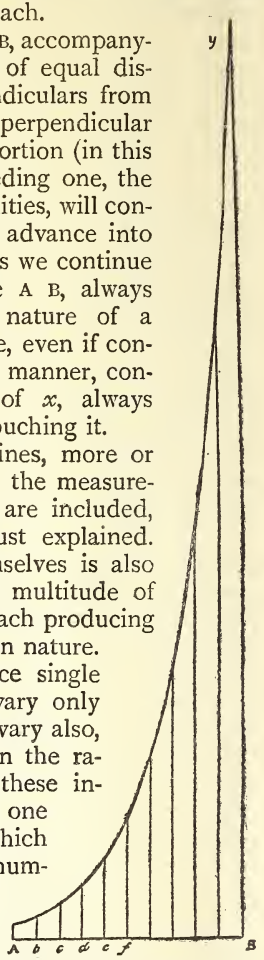


Fig 3.

There is therefore a peculiar equanimity and harmony about the look of lines of this kind, differing, I think, from the expression of any others except the circle. Beyond the

point *a* the curve may be imagined to continue to an infinite degree of smallness, always circling nearer and nearer to a point, which, however, it can never reach.

Again: if along the horizontal line, A B, accompanying figure, we measure any number of equal distances, A *b*, *b c*, &c., and raise perpendiculars from the points *b*, *c*, *d*, &c., of which each perpendicular shall be longer, by some given proportion (in this figure it is one-third), than the preceding one, the curve *x y*, traced through their extremities, will continually change its direction, but will advance into space in the direction of *y* as long as we continue to measure distances along the line A B, always inclining more and more to the nature of a straight line, yet never becoming one, even if continued to infinity. It would, in like manner, continue to infinity in the direction of *x*, always approaching the line A B, yet never touching it.



An infinite number of different lines, more or less violent in curvature according to the measurements we adopt in designing them, are included, or defined, by each of the laws just explained. But the number of these laws themselves is also infinite. There is no limit to the multitude of conditions which may be invented, each producing a group of curves of a certain common nature. Some of these laws, indeed, produce single curves, which, like the circle, can vary only in size; but, for the most part, they vary also, like the lines we have just traced, in the rapidity of their curvature. Among these innumerable lines, however, there is one source of difference in character which divides them, infinite as they are in number, into two great classes. The first class consists of those which are limited in their course, either ending abruptly, or returning to some point from which they set out; the second class, of those lines whose nature is

to proceed for ever into space. Any portion of a circle, for instance, is, by the law of its being, compelled, if it continue its course, to return to the point from which it set out; so also any portion of the oval curve (called an ellipse), produced by cutting a cylinder obliquely across. And if a single point be marked on the rim of a carriage wheel, this point, as the wheel rolls along the road, will trace a curve in the air from one part of the road to another, which is called a cycloid, and to which the law of its existence appoints that it shall always follow a similar course, and be terminated by the level line on which the wheel rolls. All such curves are of inferior beauty: and the curves which are incapable of being completely drawn, because, as in the two cases above given, the law of their being supposes them to proceed for ever into space, are of a higher beauty.

Thus, in the very first elements of form, a lesson is given us as to the true source of the nobleness and chooseableness of all things. The two classes of curves thus sternly separated from each other, may most properly be distinguished as the "Mortal and Immortal Curves;" the one having an appointed term of existence, the other absolutely incomprehensible and endless, only to be seen or grasped during a certain moment of their course. And it is found universally that the class to which the human mind is attached for its chief enjoyment are the Endless or Immortal lines.

"Nay, but," the reader answers, "what right have you to say that one class is more beautiful than the other? Suppose I like the finite curves best, who shall say which of us is right?"

No one. It is simply a question of experience. You will not, I think, continue to like the finite curves best as you contemplate them carefully, and compare them with the others. And if you should do so, it then yet becomes a question to be decided by longer trial, or more widely canvassed opinion. And when we find on examination that every form which, by the consent of human kind, has been received as lovely, in vases, flowing ornaments, embroideries, and all other things dependent on abstract line, is composed of these infinite

curves, and that Nature uses them for every important contour, small or large, which she desires to recommend to human observance, we shall not, I think, doubt that the preference of such lines is a sign of healthy taste, and true instinct.

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49. Stones.

It is somewhat singular that the indistinctness of treatment which has been so often noticed as characteristic of our present art shows itself always most when there is least apparent reason for it. Modern artists, having some true sympathy with what is vague in nature, draw all that is uncertain and evasive without evasion, and render faithfully whatever can be discerned in faithless mist or mocking vapours; but having no sympathy with what is solid and serene, they seem to become uncertain themselves in proportion to the certainty of what they see; and while they render flakes of far-away cloud, or fringes of inextricable forest, with something like patience and fidelity, give nothing but the hastiest indication of the ground they can tread upon or touch. It is only in modern art that we find any complete representation of clouds, and only in ancient art that, generally speaking, we find any careful realization of Stones.

This is all the more strange, because, as we saw some time back, the *ruggedness* of the stone is more pleasing to the modern than the mediæval, and he rarely completes any picture satisfactorily to himself unless large spaces of it are filled with irregular masonry, rocky banks, or shingly shores: whereas the mediæval could conceive no desirableness in the loose and unhewn masses; associated them generally in his mind with wicked men, and the Martyrdom of St. Stephen; and always threw them out of his road, or garden, to the best of his power.

Yet with all this difference in predilection, such was the honesty of the mediæval, and so firm his acknowledgment of the necessity to paint completely whatever was to be painted at all, that there is hardly a strip of earth under the

feet of a saint, in any finished work of the early painters, but more, and better painted, stones are to be found upon it than in an entire exhibition full of modern mountain scenery.

Not better painted in every respect. In those interesting and popular treatises on the art of drawing, which tell the public that their colours should neither be too warm nor too cold, and that their touches should always be characteristic of the object they are intended to represent, the directions given for the manufacture of stones usually enforce "crispness of outline" and "roughness of texture." And, accordingly, in certain expressions of frangibility, irregular accumulation, and easy resting of one block upon another, together with some conditions of lichenous or mossy texture, modern stone-painting is far beyond the ancient; for these are just the characters which first strike the eye, and enable the foreground to maintain its picturesque influence without inviting careful examination. The mediæval painter, on the other hand, not caring for this picturesque general effect, nor being in anywise familiar with mountain scenery, perceived in stones, when he was forced to paint them, eminently the characters which they had in common with figures; that is to say, their curved outlines, rounded surfaces, and varieties of delicate colour, and, accordingly, was somewhat too apt to lose their angular and fragmentary character in a series of muscular lines resembling those of an anatomical preparation; for, although in large rocks the cleavable or frangible nature was the thing that necessarily struck him most, the pebbles under his feet were apt to be oval or rounded in the localities of almost all the important schools of Italy. In Lombardy, the mass of the ground is composed of nothing but Alpine gravel, consisting of rolled oval pebbles, on the average about six inches long by four wide—awkward building materials, yet used in ingenious alternation with the bricks in all the lowland Italian fortresses. Besides this universal rotundity, the qualities of stones which rendered them valuable to the lapidary were forced on the painter's attention by the familiar arts of inlaying and mosaic. Hence, in looking at a pebble, his mind was divided between its roundnesses and its veins; and Leonardo covers the shelves

of rock under the feet of St. Anne with variegated agates; while Mantegna often strews the small stones about his mountain caves in a polished profusion, as if some repentant martyr princess had been just scattering her caskets of pearls into the dust.

Some years ago, as I was talking of the curvilinear forms in a piece of rock to one of our academicians, he said to me, in a somewhat despondent accent: "If you look for curves, you will see curves; if you look for angles, you will see angles."

The saying appeared to me an infinitely sad one. It was the utterance of an experienced man; and in many ways true, for one of the most singular gifts, or, if abused, most singular weaknesses, of the human mind is its power of persuading itself to see whatever it chooses—a great gift, if directed to the discernment of the things needful and pertinent to its own work and being; a great weakness, if directed to the discovery of things profitless or discouraging. In all things throughout the world, the men who look for the crooked will see the crooked, and the men who look for the straight will see the straight. But yet the saying was a notably sad one; for it came of the conviction in the speaker's mind that there was in reality *no* crooked and *no* straight; that all so-called discernment was fancy, and that men might, with equal rectitude of judgment, and good-deserving of their fellow-men, perceive and paint whatever was convenient to them.

Whereas things may always be seen truly by candid people, though never *completely*. No human capacity ever yet saw the whole of a thing; but we may see more and more of it the longer we look. Every individual temper will see something different in it: but supposing the tempers honest, all the differences are there. Every advance in our acuteness of perception will show us something new; but the old and first discerned thing will still be there, not falsified, only modified and enriched by the new perceptions, becoming continually more beautiful in its harmony with them, and more approved as a part of the Infinite truth.

There are no natural objects out of which more can be thus learned than out of stones. They seem to have been

created especially to reward a patient observer. Nearly all other objects in nature can be seen, to some extent, without patience, and are pleasant even in being half seen. Trees, clouds, and rivers are enjoyable even by the careless; but the stone under his foot has for carelessness nothing in it but stumbling: no pleasure is languidly to be had out of it, nor food, nor good of any kind; nothing but symbolism of the hard heart and the unfatherly gift. And yet, do but give it some reverence and watchfulness, and there is bread of thought in it, more than in any other lowly feature of all the landscape.

For a stone, when it is examined, will be found a mountain in miniature. The fineness of Nature's work is so great, that, into a single block, a foot or two in diameter, she can compress as many changes of form and structure, on a small scale, as she needs for her mountains on a large one; and, taking moss for forests, and grains of crystal for crags, the surface of a stone, in by far the plurality of instances, is more interesting than the surface of an ordinary hill; more fantastic in form, and incomparably richer in colour.

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50. The Mountain Gloom.

I DO not know any district possessing a more pure or uninterrupted fulness of mountain character (and that of the highest order), or which appears to have been less disturbed by foreign agencies, than that which borders the course of the Trient between Valorsine and Martigny. The paths which lead to it out of the valley of the Rhone, rising at first in steep circles among the walnut trees, like winding stairs among the pillars of a Gothic tower, retire over the shoulders of the hills into a valley almost unknown, but thickly inhabited by an industrious and patient population. Along the ridges of the rocks, smoothed by old glaciers into long, dark, billowy swellings, like the backs of plunging dolphins, the peasant watches the slow colouring of the tufts of moss and roots of herb which, little by little, gather a feeble soil over the iron substance; then, supporting the narrow strip

of clinging ground with a few stones, he subdues it to the spade; and in a year or two a little crest of corn is seen waving upon the rocky casque. The irregular meadows run in and out like inlets of lake among these harvested rocks, sweet with perpetual streamlets, that seem always to have chosen the steepest places to come down, for the sake of the leaps, scattering their handfuls of crystal this way and that, as the wind takes them, with all the grace, but with none of the formalism, of fountains; dividing into fanciful change of dash and spring, yet with the seal of their granite channels upon them, as the lightest play of human speech may bear the seal of past toil, and closing back out of their spray to lave the rigid angles, and brighten with silver fringes and glassy films each lower and lower step of sable stone; until at last, gathered altogether again—except, perhaps, some chance drops caught on the apple-blossom, where it has budded a little nearer the cascade than it did last spring—they find their way down to the turf, and lose themselves in that, silently; with quiet depth of clear water furrowing among the grass blades, and looking only like their shadow, but presently emerging again in little startled gushes and laughing hurries, as if they had remembered suddenly that the day was too short for them to get down the hill.

Green field, and glowing rock, and glancing streamlet, all slope together in the sunshine towards the brows of ravines, where the pines take up their own dominion of saddened shade; and with everlasting roar in the twilight, the stronger torrents thunder down, pale from the glaciers, filling all their chasms with enchanted cold, beating themselves to pieces against the great rocks that they have themselves cast down, and forcing fierce way beneath their ghastly poise.

The mountain paths stoop to these glens in forky zigzags, leading to some grey and narrow arch, all fringed under its shuddering curve with the ferns that fear the light; a cross of rough-hewn pine, iron-bound to its parapet, standing dark against the lurid fury of the foam. Far up the glen, as we pause beside the cross, the sky is seen through the openings in the pines, thin with excess of light; and, in its clear, consuming flame of white space, the summits of the rocky

mountains are gathered into solemn crowns and circlets, all flushed in that strange, faint silence of possession by the sunshine which has in it so deep a melancholy; full of power, yet as frail as shadows; lifeless, like the walls of a sepulchre, yet beautiful in tender fall of crimson folds, like the veil of some sea spirit, that lives and dies as the foam flashes; fixed on a perpetual throne, stern against all strength, lifted above all sorrow, and yet effaced and melted utterly into the air by that last sunbeam that has crossed to them from between the two golden clouds.

High above all sorrow: yes; but not unwitnessing to it. The traveller on his happy journey, as his foot springs from the deep turf and strikes the pebbles gaily over the edge of the mountain road, sees with a glance of delight the clusters of nutbrown cottages that nestle among those sloping orchards, and glow beneath the boughs of the pines. Here, it may well seem to him, if there be sometimes hardship, there must be at least innocence and peace, and fellowship of the human soul with nature. It is not so. The wild goats that leap along those rocks have as much passion of joy in all that fair work of God as the men that toil among them. Perhaps more. Enter the street of one of those villages, and you will find it foul with that gloomy foulness that is suffered only by torpor, or by anguish of soul. Here, it is torpor—not absolute suffering—not starvation or disease, but darkness of calm enduring; the spring known only as the time of the scythe, and the autumn as the time of the sickle, and the sun only as a warmth, the wind as a chill, and the mountains as a danger. They do not understand so much as the name of beauty, or of knowledge. They understand dimly that of virtue. Love, patience, hospitality, faith—these things they know. To glean their meadows side by side, so happier; to bear the burden up the breathless mountain flank, unmurmuringly; to bid the stranger drink from their vessel of milk; to see at the foot of their low deathbeds a pale figure upon a cross, dying also, patiently;—in this they are different from the cattle and from the stones, but in all this unrewarded as far as concerns the present life. For them, there is neither hope nor passion of spirit; for them neither

advance nor exultation. Black bread, rude roof, dark night, laborious day, weary arm at sunset; and life ebbs away. No books, no thoughts, no attainments, no rest; except only sometimes a little sitting in the sun under the church wall, as the bell tolls thin and far in the mountain air; a pattering of a few prayers, not understood, by the altar rails of the dimly gilded chapel, and so back to the sombre home, with the cloud upon them still unbroken—that cloud of rocky gloom, born out of the wild torrents and ruinous stones, and unlightened, even in their religion, except by the vague promise of some better thing unknown, mingled with threatening, and obscured by an unspeakable horror—a smoke, as it were, of martyrdom, coiling up with the incense, and, amidst the images of tortured bodies and lamenting spirits in hurtling flames, the very cross, for them, dashed more deeply than for others, with gouts of blood.

Do not let this be thought a darkened picture of the life of these mountaineers. It is literal fact. No contrast can be more painful than that between the dwelling of any well-conducted English cottager, and that of the equally honest Savoyard. The one, set in the midst of its dull flat fields and uninteresting hedgerows, shows in itself the love of brightness and beauty; its daisy-studded garden-beds, its smoothly swept brick path to the threshold, its freshly sanded floor and orderly shelves of household furniture, all testify to energy of heart, and happiness in the simple course and simple possessions of daily life. The other cottage, in the midst of an inconceivable, inexpressible beauty, set on some sloping bank of golden sward, with clear fountains flowing beside it, and wild flowers, and noble trees, and goodly rocks gathered round into a perfection as of Paradise, is itself a dark and plague-like stain in the midst of the gentle landscape. Within a certain distance of its threshold the ground is foul and cattle-trampled; its timbers are black with smoke, its garden choked with weeds and nameless refuse, its chambers empty and joyless, the light and wind gleaming and filtering through the crannies of their stones. All testifies that to its inhabitant the world is labour and vanity; that for him neither flowers bloom, nor birds sing, nor foun-

tains glisten; and that his soul hardly differs from the grey cloud that coils and dies upon his hills, except in having no fold of it touched by the sunbeams.

Is it not strange to reflect, that hardly an evening passes in London or Paris, but one of those cottages is painted for the better amusement of the fair and idle, and shaded with pasteboard pines by the scene-shifter; and that good and kind people, poetically minded, delight themselves in imagining the happy life led by peasants who dwell by Alpine fountains, and kneel to crosses upon peaks of rock? that nightly we lay down our gold, to fashion forth simulacra of peasants, in gay ribands and white bodices, singing sweet songs, and bowing gracefully to the picturesque crosses; and all the while the veritable peasants are kneeling, songlessly, to veritable crosses, in another temper than the kind and fair audiences deem of, and assuredly with another kind of answer than is got out of the opera catastrophe; an answer having reference, it may be, in dim futurity, to those very audiences themselves? If all the gold that has gone to paint the simulacra of the cottages, and to put new songs in the mouths of the simulacra of the peasants, had gone to brighten the existent cottages, and to put new songs in the mouths of the existent peasants, it might in the end, perhaps, have turned out better so, not only for the peasant, but for even the audience. For that form of the False Ideal has also its correspondent True Ideal, consisting not in the naked beauty of statues, nor in the gauze flowers and crackling tinsel of theatres, but in the clothed and fed beauty of living men, and in the lights and laughs of happy homes. Night after night, the desire of such an ideal springs up in every idle human heart; and night after night, as far as idleness can, we work out this desire in costly lies. We paint the faded actress, build the lath landscape, feed our benevolence with fallacies of felicity, and satisfy our righteousness with poetry of justice. The time will come when, as the heavy-folded curtain falls upon our own stage of life, we shall begin to comprehend that the justice we loved was intended to have been done in fact, and not in poetry, and the felicity we sympathized in, to have been bestowed and

not feigned. We talk much of money's worth, yet perhaps may one day be surprised to find that what the wise and charitable European public gave to one night's rehearsal of hypocrisy—to one hour's pleasant warbling of Linda or Lucia—would have filled a whole Alpine valley with happiness, and poured the waves of harvest over the famine of many a Lammermoor.

"Nay," perhaps the reader answers, "it is vain to hope that this could ever be. The perfect beauty of the ideal must always be fictitious. It is rational to amuse ourselves with the fair imagination; but it would be madness to endeavour to put it into practice, in the face of the ordinances of Nature. Real shepherdesses must always be rude, and real peasants miserable; suffer us to turn away our gentle eyes from their coarseness and their pain, and to seek comfort in cultivated voices and purchased smiles. We cannot hew down the rocks, nor turn the sands of the torrent into gold."

This is no answer. Be assured of the great truth—that what is impossible in reality, is ridiculous in fancy. If it is not in the nature of things that peasants should be gentle and happy, then the imagination of such peasantry is ridiculous, and to delight in such imagination, wrong; as delight in any kind of falsehood is always. But if in the nature of things it be possible that among the wildness of hills the human heart should be refined, and if the comfort of dress, and the gentleness of language, and the joy of progress in knowledge, and of variety in thought, are possible to the mountaineer in his true existence, let us strive to write this true poetry upon the rocks before we indulge it in our visions, and try whether, among all the fine arts, one of the finest be not that of painting cheeks with health rather than rouge.

51. The Mountain Glory.

LET us consider the difference produced in the whole tone of landscape colour by the introductions of purple, violet, and deep ultramarine blue, which we owe to mountains. In an

ordinary lowland landscape we have the blue of the sky; the green of grass, which I will suppose (and this is an unnecessary concession to the lowlands) entirely fresh and bright; the green of trees; and certain elements of purple, far more rich and beautiful than we generally should think, in their bark and shadows (bare hedges and thickets, or tops of trees, in subdued afternoon sunshine, are nearly perfect purple, and of an exquisite tone), as well as in ploughed fields, and dark ground in general. But among mountains, in *addition* to all this, large unbroken spaces of pure violet and purple are introduced in their distances; and even near, by films of cloud passing over the darkness of ravines or forests, blues are produced of the most subtle tenderness; these azures and purples[1] passing into rose-colour of otherwise wholly unattainable delicacy among the upper summits, the blue of the sky being at the same time purer and deeper than in the plains. Nay, in some sense, a person who has never seen the rose-colour of the rays of dawn crossing a blue mountain twelve or fifteen miles away, can hardly be said to know what *tenderness* in colour means at all; *bright* tenderness he may, indeed, see in the sky or in a flower, but this grave tenderness of the far-away hill-purples he cannot conceive.

Together with this great source of pre-eminence in *mass* of colour, we have to estimate the influence of the finished inlaying and enamel-work of the colour-jewellery on every stone; and that of the continual variety in species of flower; most of the mountain flowers being, besides, separately lovelier than the lowland ones. The wood hyacinth and wild rose are, indeed, the only *supreme* flowers that the lowlands can generally show; and the wild rose is also a mountaineer,

[1] One of the principal reasons for the false supposition that Switzerland is not picturesque, is the error of most sketchers and painters in representing pine forest in middle distance as dark *green*, or grey green, whereas its true colour is always purple, at distances of even two or three miles. Let any traveller coming down the Montanvert look for an aperture, three or four inches wide, between the near pine branches, through which, standing eight or ten feet from it, he can see the opposite forests on the Breven or Flegère. These forests are not above two or two and a half miles from him; but he will find the aperture is filled by a tint of nearly pure azure or purple, not by green.

and more fragrant in the hills, while the wood hyacinth, or grape hyacinth, at its best, cannot match even the dark bell-gentian, leaving the light-blue star-gentian in its uncontested queenliness, and the Alpine rose and Highland heather wholly without similitude. The violet, lily of the valley, crocus, and wood anemone are, I suppose, claimable partly by the plains as well as the hills; but the large orange lily and narcissus I have never seen but on hill pastures, and the exquisite oxalis is pre-eminently a mountaineer.[1]

To this supremacy in mosses and flowers we have next to add an inestimable gain in the continual presence and power of water. Neither in its clearness, its colour, its fantasy of motion, its calmness of space, depth, and reflection, or its wrath, can water be conceived by a lowlander, out of sight of sea. A sea wave is far grander than any torrent—but of the sea and its influences we are not now speaking; and the sea itself, though it *can* be clear, is never calm, among our shores, in the sense that a mountain lake can be calm. The sea seems only to pause; the mountain lake to sleep, and to dream. Out of sight of the ocean a lowlander cannot be considered ever to have seen water at all. The mantling of the pools in the rock shadows, with the golden flakes of light sinking down through them like falling leaves, the ringing of the thin currents among the shallows, the flash and the cloud of the cascade, the earthquake and foam-fire of the cataract, the long lines of alternate mirror and mist that lull the imagery of the hills reversed in the blue of morning—all these things belong to those hills as their undivided inheritance.

To this supremacy in wave and stream is joined a no less manifest pre-eminence in the character of trees. It is possible among plains, in the species of trees which properly belong to them, the poplars of Amiens, for instance, to obtain a serene simplicity of grace, which, as I said, is a better help to the study of gracefulness, as such, than any of the wilder groupings of the hills; so also, there are certain

[1] The Savoyard's name for its flower, "Pain du Bon Dieu," is very beautiful; from, I believe, the supposed resemblance of its white and scattered blossom to the fallen manna.

conditions of symmetrical luxuriance developed in the park and avenue, rarely rivalled in their way among mountains; and yet the mountain superiority in foliage is, on the whole, nearly as complete as it is in water: for exactly as there are some expressions in the broad reaches of a navigable lowland river, such as the Loire or Thames, not, in their way, to be matched among the rock rivers, and yet for all that a lowlander cannot be said to have truly seen the element of water at all; so even in his richest parks and avenues he cannot be said to have truly seen trees. For the resources of trees are not developed until they have difficulty to contend with; neither their tenderness of brotherly love and harmony, till they are forced to choose their ways of various life where there is contracted room for them, talking to each other with their restrained branches. The various action of trees rooting themselves in inhospitable rocks, stooping to look into ravines, hiding from the search of glacier winds, reaching forth to the rays of rare sunshine, crowding down together to drink at sweetest streams, climbing hand in hand among the difficult slopes, opening in sudden dances round the mossy knolls, gathering into companies at rest among the fragrant fields, gliding in grave procession over the heavenward ridges—nothing of this can be conceived among the unvexed and unvaried felicities of the lowland forest: while to all these direct sources of greater beauty are added, first the power of redundance—the mere quantity of foliage visible in the folds and on the promontories of a single Alp being greater than that of an entire lowland landscape (unless a view from some cathedral tower); and to this charm of redundance, that of clearer *visibility*—tree after tree being constantly shown in successive height, one behind another, instead of the mere tops and flanks of masses, as in the plains; and the forms of multitudes of them continually defined against the clear sky, near and above, or against white clouds entangled among their branches, instead of being confused in dimness of distance.

Finally, to this supremacy in foliage we have to add the still less questionable supremacy in clouds. There is no effect of sky possible in the lowlands which may not in equal

perfection be seen among the hills; but there are effects by tens of thousands, for ever invisible and inconceivable to the inhabitant of the plains, manifested among the hills in the course of one day. The mere power of familiarity with the clouds, of walking with them and above them, alters and renders clear our whole conception of the baseless architecture of the sky; and for the beauty of it, there is more in a single wreath of early cloud, pacing its way up an avenue of pines, or pausing among the points of their fringes, than in all the white heaps that fill the arched sky of the plains from one horizon to the other. And of the nobler cloud manifestations—the breaking of their troublous seas against the crags, their black spray sparkling with lightning; or the going forth of the morning along their pavements of moving marble, level-laid between dome and dome of snow; of these things there can be as little imagination or understanding in an inhabitant of the plains as of the scenery of another planet than his own.

And, observe, all these superiorities are matters plainly measurable and calculable, not in any wise to be referred to estimate of *sensation*. Of the grandeur or expression of the hills I have not spoken; how far they are great, or strong, or terrible, I do not for the moment consider, because vastness, and strength, and terror, are not to all minds subjects of desired contemplation. It may make no difference to some men whether a natural object be large or small, whether it be strong or feeble. But loveliness of colour, perfectness of form, endlessness of change, wonderfulness of structure, are precious to all undiseased human minds; and the superiority of the mountains in all these things to the lowland is, I repeat, as measurable as the richness of a painted window matched with a white one, or the wealth of a museum compared with that of a simply furnished chamber. They seem to have been built for the human race, as at once their schools and cathedrals; full of treasures of illuminated manuscript for the scholar, kindly in simple lessons to the worker, quiet in pale cloisters for the thinker, glorious in holiness for the worshipper. And of these great cathedrals of the earth, with their gates of rock, pavements of cloud,

choirs of stream and stone, altars of snow, and vaults of purple traversed by the continual stars—of these, as we have seen, it was written, nor long ago, by one of the best of the poor human race for whom they were built, wondering in himself for whom their Creator *could* have made them, and thinking to have entirely discerned the Divine intent in them—"They are inhabited by the Beasts."

Was it then indeed thus with us, and so lately? Had mankind offered no worship in their mountain churches? Was all that granite sculpture and floral painting done by the angels in vain?

Not so. It will need no prolonged thought to convince us that in the hills the purposes of their Maker have indeed been accomplished in such measure as, through the sin or folly of men, He ever permits them to be accomplished. It may not seem, from the general language held concerning them, or from any directly traceable results, that mountains have had serious influence on human intellect; but it will not, I think, be difficult to show that their occult influence has been both constant and essential to the progress of the race.

Consider, first, whether we can justly refuse to attribute to their mountain scenery some share in giving the Greeks and Italians their intellectual lead among the nations of Europe.

There is not a single spot of land in either of these countries from which mountains are not discernible; almost always they form the principal feature of the scenery. The mountain outlines seen from Sparta, Corinth, Athens, Rome, Florence, Pisa, Verona, are of consummate beauty; and whatever dislike or contempt may be traceable in the mind of the Greeks for mountain ruggedness, their placing the shrine of Apollo under the cliffs of Delphi, and his throne upon Parnassus, was a testimony to all succeeding time that they themselves attributed the best part of their intellectual inspiration to the power of the hills. Nor would it be difficult to show that every great writer of either of those nations, however little definite regard he might manifest for the landscape of his country, had been mentally formed and disciplined by it, so that even such enjoyment as Homer's

of the ploughed ground and poplar groves owes its intensity and delicacy to the excitement of the imagination produced, without his own consciousness, by other and grander features of the scenery to which he had been accustomed from a child; and differs in every respect from the tranquil, vegetative, and prosaic affection with which the same ploughed land and poplars would be regarded by a native of the Netherlands.

52. Mountains and Literature.

For this also the mountain influence is still necessary, only in a subordinate degree. It is true, indeed, that the Avon is no mountain torrent, and that the hills round the vale of Stratford are not sublime; true, moreover, that the cantons Berne or Uri have never yet, so far as I know, produced a great poet; but neither, on the other hand, has Antwerp or Amsterdam. And, I believe, the natural scenery which will be found, on the whole, productive of most literary intellect is that mingled of hill and plain, as all available light is of flame and darkness; the flame being the active element, and the darkness the tempering one.

In noting such evidence as bears upon this subject, the reader must always remember that the mountains are at an unfair disadvantage, in being much *out of the way* of the masses of men employed in intellectual pursuits. The position of a city is dictated by military necessity or commercial convenience: it rises, flourishes, and absorbs into its activity whatever leading intellect is in the surrounding population. The persons who are able and desirous to give their children education naturally resort to it; the best schools, the best society, and the strongest motives assist and excite those born within its walls; and youth after youth rises to distinction out of its streets, while among the blue mountains, twenty miles away, the goatherds live and die in unregarded lowliness. And yet this is no proof that the mountains have little effect upon the mind, or that the streets have a helpful one. The men who are formed by the schools, and polished

by the society of the capital, may yet in many ways have their powers shortened by the absence of natural scenery; and the mountaineer, neglected, ignorant, and unambitious, may have been taught things by the clouds and streams which he could not have learned in a college, or a coterie.

And in reasoning about the effect of mountains we are therefore under a difficulty like that which would occur to us if we had to determine the good or bad effect of light on the human constitution, in some place where all corporal exercise was necessarily in partial darkness, and only idle people lived in the light. The exercise might give an advantage to the occupants of the gloom, but we should neither be justified in therefore denying the preciousness of light in general, nor the necessity to the workers of the few rays they possessed; and thus I suppose the hills around Stratford, and such glimpses as Shakspeare had of sandstone and pines in Warwickshire, or of chalk cliffs in Kent, to have been essential to the development of his genius. This supposition can only be proved false by the rising of a Shakspeare at Rotterdam or Bergen-op-Zoom, which I think not probable; whereas, on the other hand, it is confirmed by myriads of collateral evidences. The matter could only be *tested* by placing for half a century the British universities at Keswick and Beddgelert, and making Grenoble the capital of France; but if, throughout the history of Britain and France, we contrast the general invention and pathetic power, in ballads or legends, of the inhabitants of the Scottish Border with those manifested in Suffolk or Essex; and similarly the inventive power of Normandy, Provence, and the Bearnois with that of Champagne or Picardy, we shall obtain some convincing evidence respecting the operation of hills on the masses of mankind, and be disposed to admit, with less hesitation, that the apparent inconsistencies in the effect of scenery on greater minds proceed in each case from specialities of education, accident, and original temper, which it would be impossible to follow out in detail. Sometimes only, when the original resemblance in character of intellect is very marked in two individuals, and they are submitted to definitely contrary cir-

cumstances of education, an approximation to evidence may be obtained. Thus Bacon and Pascal appear to be men naturally very similar in their temper and powers of mind. One, born in York House, Strand, of courtly parents, educated in court atmosphere, and replying, almost as soon as he could speak, to the queen asking how old he was—"Two years younger than Your Majesty's happy reign!"—has the world's meanness and cunning engrafted into his intellect, and remains smooth, serene, unenthusiastic, and in some degree base, even with all his sincere devotion and universal wisdom; bearing, to the end of life, the likeness of a marble palace in the street of a great city, fairly furnished within, and bright in wall and battlement, yet noisome in places about the foundations. The other, born at Clermont in Auvergne, under the shadow of the Puy de Dôme, though taken to Paris at eight years old, retains for ever the impress of his birthplace; pursuing natural philosophy with the same zeal as Bacon, he returns to his own mountains to put himself under their tutelage, and by their help first discovers the great relations of the earth and the air: struck at last with mortal disease; gloomy, enthusiastic, and superstitious, with a conscience burning like lava, and inflexible like iron, the clouds gather about the majesty of him, fold after fold; and, with his spirit buried in ashes, and rent by earthquake, yet fruitful of true thought and faithful affection, he stands like that mound of desolate scoria that crowns the hill ranges of his native land, with its sable summit far in heaven, and its foundations green with the ordered garden and the trellised vine.

When, however, our inquiry thus branches into the successive analysis of individual characters, it is time for us to leave it; noting only one or two points respecting Shakspeare.....He seems to have been sent essentially to take universal and equal grasp of the *human* nature; and to have been removed, therefore, from all influences which could in the least warp or bias his thoughts. It was necessary that he should lean *no* way; that he should contemplate, with absolute equality of judgment, the life of the court, cloister, and tavern, and be able to sympathize so completely with all creatures as to

deprive himself, together with his personal identity, even of his conscience, as he casts himself into their hearts. He must be able to enter into the soul of Falstaff or Shylock with no more sense of contempt or horror than Falstaff or Shylock themselves feel for or in themselves; otherwise his own conscience and indignation would make him unjust to them; he would turn aside from something, miss some good, or overlook some essential palliation. He must be utterly without anger, utterly without purpose; for if a man has any serious purpose in life, that which runs counter to it, or is foreign to it, will be looked at frowningly or carelessly by him. Shakspeare was forbidden of Heaven to have any *plans*. To *do* any good or *get* any good, in the common sense of good, was not to be within his permitted range of work. Not, for him, the founding of institutions, the preaching of doctrines, or the repression of abuses. Neither he, nor the sun, did on any morning that they rose together, receive charge from their Maker concerning such things. They were both of them to shine on the evil and good; both to behold unoffendedly all that was upon the earth, to burn unappalled upon the spears of kings, and undisdaining, upon the reeds of the river.

Therefore, so far as nature had influence over the early training of this man, it was essential to his perfectness that the nature should be quiet. No mountain passions were to be allowed in him. Inflict upon him but one pang of the monastic conscience; cast upon him but one cloud of the mountain gloom; and his serenity had been gone for ever—his equity—his infinity. You would have made another Dante of him; and all that he would have ever uttered about poor, soiled, and frail humanity would have been the quarrel between Sinon and Adam of Brescia—speedily retired from, as not worthy a man's hearing, nay, not to be heard without heavy fault. All your Falstaffs, Slenders, Quicklys, Sir Tobys, Lances, Touchstones, and Quinces would have been lost in that. Shakspeare could be allowed no mountains; nay, not even any supreme natural beauty. He had to be left with his kingcups and clover—pansies—the passing clouds—the Avon's flow—and the undulating hills

and woods of Warwick; nay, he was not to love even these in any exceeding measure, lest it might make him in the least overrate their power upon the strong, full-fledged minds of men. He makes the quarrelling fairies concerned about them; poor lost Ophelia find some comfort in them; fearful, fair, wise-hearted Perdita trust the speaking of her good will and good hostess-ship to them; and one of the brothers of Imogen confide his sorrow to them—rebuked instantly by his brother for "wench-like words;"[1] but any thought of them in his mighty men I do not find: it is not usually in the nature of such men; and if he had loved the flowers the *least* better himself, he would assuredly have been offended at this, and given a botanical turn of mind to Cæsar, or Othello.

And it is even among the most curious proofs of the necessity to all high imagination that it should paint straight from the life, that he has *not* given such a turn of mind to some of his great men—Henry the Fifth, for instance. Doubtless some of my readers, having been accustomed to hear it repeated thoughtlessly from mouth to mouth that Shakspeare conceived the spirit of all ages, were as much offended as surprised at my saying that he only painted

[1]
> With fairest flowers
> While summer lasts, and I live here, Fidele,
> I'll sweeten thy sad grave. Thou shalt not lack
> The flower that's like thy face—pale primrose, nor
> The azured harebell—like thy veins; no, nor
> The leaf of eglantine, whom not to slander,
> Outsweetened not thy breath. The ruddock would
> With charitable bill bring thee all this;
> Yea, and furred moss besides, when flowers are none,
> To winter-ground thy corse.
> *Gui.* Prithee, have done,
> And do not play in wench-like words with that
> Which is so serious.

Imogen herself, afterwards, in deeper passion, will give weeds—not flowers—and something more:

> And when
> With wildwood leaves, and weeds, I have strewed his grave,
> And on it said a century of prayers,
> Such as I can, twice o'er, I'll weep, and sigh,
> And, leaving so his service, follow you.

human nature as he saw it in his own time. They will find, if they look into his work closely, as much antiquarianism as they do geography, and no more. The commonly received notions about the things that had been, Shakspeare took as he found them, animating them with pure human nature, of any time and all time; but inquiries into the minor detail of temporary feeling, he despised as utterly as he did maps; and wheresoever the temporary feeling was in any wise contrary to that of his own day, he errs frankly, and paints from his own time. For instance in this matter of love of flowers; we have traced already, far enough for our general purposes, the mediæval interest in them, whether to be enjoyed in the fields, or to be used for types of ornamentation in dress. If Shakspeare had cared to enter into the spirit even of the early fifteenth century, he would assuredly have marked this affection in some of his knights, and indicated, even then, in heroic tempers, the peculiar respect for loveliness of *dress* which we find constantly in Dante. But he could not do this; he had not seen it in real life. In his time dress had become an affectation and absurdity. Only fools, or wise men in their weak moments, showed much concern about it; and the facts of human nature which appeared to him general in the matter were the soldier's disdain, and the coxcomb's care of it. Hence Shakspeare's good soldier is almost always in plain or battered armour; even the speech of Vernon in Henry the Fourth, which, as far as I remember, is the only one that bears fully upon the beauty of armour, leans more upon the spirit and hearts of men—"bated, like eagles having lately bathed;" and has an under-current of slight contempt running through the following line: "Glittering in golden coats, *like images;*" while the beauty of the young Harry is essentially the beauty of fiery and perfect youth, answering as much to the Greek, or Roman, or Elizabethan knight as to the mediæval one; whereas the definite interest in armour and dress is opposed by Shakspeare in the French (meaning to depreciate them), to the English rude soldierliness:

Con. Tut, I have the best armour of the world. Would it were day!
Orl. You have an excellent armour, but let my horse have his due.

And again:

> My lord constable, the armour that I saw in your tent to-night, are those stars, or suns, upon it?

while Henry, half proud of his poorness of array, speaks of armorial splendour scornfully; the main idea being still of its being a gilded show and vanity:

> Our gayness and our *gilt* are all besmirched.

This is essentially Elizabethan. The quarterings on a knight's shield, or the inlaying of his armour, would never have been thought of by him as mere "gayness or gilt" in earlier days.[1] In like manner, throughout every scale of rank or feeling, from that of the French knights down to Falstaff's "I looked he should have sent me two-and-twenty yards of satin, as I am true knight, and he sends me security!" care for dress is always considered by Shakspeare as contemptible; and Mrs. Quickly distinguishes herself from a true fairy by her solicitude to scour the *chairs of order*—and "each fair instalment, coat, and several crest;" and the association in her mind of the flowers in the fairy rings with the

> Sapphire, pearl, and rich embroidery,
> Buckled below fair knighthood's bending knee;

while the true fairies, in field simplicity, are only anxious to "sweep the dust behind the door;" and

> With this field dew consecrate,
> Every several chamber bless
> Through this palace with sweet peace.

Note the expression "Field dew consecrate." Shakspeare loved courts and camps; but he felt that sacredness and peace were in the dew of the Fields only.

[1] If the reader thinks that in Henry the Fifth's time the Elizabethan temper might already have been manifesting itself, let him compare the English herald's speech, act 2, scene 2, of *King John;* and by way of specimen of Shakspeare's historical care, or regard of mediæval character, the large use of *artillery* in the previous scene.

There is another respect in which he was wholly incapable of entering into the spirit of the Middle Ages. He had no great art of any kind around him in his own country, and was, consequently, just as powerless to conceive the general influence of former art, as a man of the most inferior calibre. Therefore it was, that I did not care to quote his authority respecting the power of imitation, in the second chapter of the preceding volume. If it had been needful to add his testimony to that of Dante I might have quoted multitudes of passages wholly concurring with that, of which the "fair Portia's counterfeit," with the following lines, and the implied ideal of sculpture in the *Winter's Tale*, are wholly unanswerable instances. But Shakspeare's evidence in matters of art is as narrow as the range of Elizabethan art in England, and resolves itself wholly into admiration of two things—mockery of life (as in this instance of Hermione as a statue), or absolute splendour, as in the close of Romeo and Juliet, where the notion of *gold* as the chief source of dignity of aspect, coming down to Shakspeare from the times of the Field of the Cloth of Gold, and, as I said before, strictly Elizabethan, would interfere seriously with the pathos of the whole passage, but for the sense of sacrifice implied in it:

> As *rich* shall Romeo by his lady lie,
> Poor sacrifices of our enmity.

And observe, I am not giving these examples as proof of any smallness in Shakspeare, but of his greatness; that is to say, of his contentment, like every other great man who ever breathed, to paint nothing but *what he saw;* and therefore giving perpetual evidence that his sight was of the sixteenth, and not of the thirteenth century, beneath all the broad and eternal humanity of his imagination. How far in these modern days, emptied of splendour, it may be necessary for great men having certain sympathies for those earlier ages, to act in this differently from all their predecessors; and how far they may succeed in the resuscitation of the past by habitually dwelling in all their thoughts among vanished generations, are questions, of all practical and present ones

concerning art, the most difficult to decide; for already in poetry several of our truest men have set themselves to this task, and have indeed put more vitality into the shadows of the dead than most others can give the presences of the living. Thus Longfellow, in *The Golden Legend*, has entered more closely into the temper of the Monk, for good and for evil, than ever yet theological writer or historian, though they may have given their life's labour to the analysis: and, again, Robert Browning is unerring in every sentence he writes of the Middle Ages; always vital, right, and profound; so that in the matter of art, with which we have been specially concerned, there is hardly a principle connected with the mediæval temper, that he has not struck upon in those seemingly careless and too rugged rhymes of his. There is a curious instance, by the way, in a short poem referring to this very subject of tomb and image sculpture; and illustrating just one of those phases of local human character which, though belonging to Shakspeare's own age, he never noticed, because it was specially Italian and un-English; connected also closely with the influence of mountains on the heart, and therefore with our immediate inquiries. I mean the kind of admiration with which a southern artist regarded the *stone* he worked in; and the pride which populace or priest took in the possession of precious mountain substance, worked into the pavements of their cathedrals, and the shafts of their tombs.

Observe, Shakspeare, in the midst of architecture and tombs of wood, or freestone, or brass, naturally thinks of *gold* as the best enriching and ennobling substance for them; in the midst also of the fever of the Renaissance he writes, as every one else did, in praise of precisely the most vicious master of that school—Giulio Romano; but the modern poet, living much in Italy, and quit of the Renaissance influence, is able fully to enter into the Italian feeling, and to see the evil of the Renaissance tendency, not because he is greater than Shakspeare, but because he is in another element, and has *seen* other things. I miss fragments here and there not needed for my purpose in the passage quoted, without putting asterisks, for I weaken the

poem enough by the omissions, without spoiling it also by breaks.

The Bishop orders his Tomb in St. Praxed's Church.

As here I lie
In this state chamber, dying by degrees,
Hours, and long hours, in the dead night, I ask,
Do I live—am I dead? Peace, peace, seems all:
St. Praxed's ever was the church for peace.
And so, about this tomb of mine. I fought
With tooth and nail to save my niche, ye know;
Old Gandolf[1] cozened me, despite my care.
Shrewd was that snatch from out the corner south
He graced his carrion with.
Yet still my niche is not so cramped but thence
One sees the pulpit o' the epistle side,
And somewhat of the choir, those silent seats;
And up into the aëry dome where live
The angels, and a sunbeam's sure to lurk.
And I shall fill my slab of basalt there,
And 'neath my tabernacle take my rest,
With those nine columns round me, two and two,
The odd one at my feet, where Anselm[2] stands;
Peach-blossom marble all.
Swift as a weaver's shuttle fleet our years:
Man goeth to the grave, and where is he?
Did I say basalt for my slab, sons? Black—
'Twas ever antique-black[3] I meant! How else
Shall ye contrast my frieze to come beneath?
The bas-relief in bronze ye promised me,
Those Pans and Nymphs ye wot of, and perchance
Some tripod, thyrsus, with a vase or so,
The Saviour at his sermon on the mount,
St. Praxed in a glory, and one Pan,
And Moses with the tables . . . but I know
Ye mark me not! What do they whisper thee,
Child of my bowels, Anselm? Ah, ye hope
To revel down my villas while I gasp,
Bricked o'er with beggar's mouldy travertine,

[1] The last bishop.

[2] His favourite son; nominally his nephew.

[3] "Nero Antico" is more familiar to our ears; but Browning does right in translating it; as afterwards "cipollino" into "onion-stone." Our stupid habit of using foreign words without translation is continually losing us half the force of the foreign language. How many travellers hearing the term "cipollino" recognize the intended sense of a stone splitting into concentric coats, like an onion?

Which Gandolf from his tomb-top chuckles at!
Nay, boys, ye love me—all of jasper, then!
There's plenty jasper somewhere in the world—
And have I not St. Praxed's ear to pray
Horses for ye, and brown Greek manuscripts.
That's if ye carve my epitaph aright,
Choice Latin, picked phrase, Tully's every word,
No gaudy ware like Gandolf's second line—
Tully, my masters? Ulpian serves *his* need.

I know no other piece of modern English, prose or poetry, in which there is so much told, as in these lines, of the Renaissance spirit—its worldliness, inconsistency, pride, hypocrisy, ignorance of itself, love of art, of luxury, and of good Latin. It is nearly all that I said of the central Renaissance in thirty pages of *The Stones of Venice* put into as many lines, Browning's being also the antecedent work. The worst of it is that this kind of concentrated writing needs so much *solution* before the reader can fairly get the good of it, that people's patience fails them, and they give the thing up as insoluble; though, truly, it ought to be to the current of common thought like Saladin's talisman, dipped in clear water, not soluble altogether, but making the element medicinal.

It is interesting, by the way, with respect to this love of stones in the Italian mind, to consider the difference necessitated in the English temper merely by the general domestic use of wood instead of marble. In that old Shakspearian England, men must have rendered a grateful homage to their oak forests, in the sense of all that they owed to their goodly timbers in the wainscot and furniture of the rooms they loved best, when the blue of the frosty midnight was contrasted, in the dark diamonds of the lattice, with the glowing brown of the warm, fire-lighted, crimson-tapestried walls. Not less would an Italian look with a grateful regard on the hill summits, to which he owed, in the scorching of his summer noonday, escape into the marble corridor or crypt palpitating only with cold and smooth variegation of the unfevered mountain veins. In some sort, as, both in our stubbornness and our comfort, we not unfitly describe ourselves typically as Hearts of Oak, the

Italians might in their strange and variegated mingling of passion, like purple colour, with a cruel sternness, like white rock, truly describe themselves as Hearts of Stone.

Into this feeling about marble in domestic use, Shakspeare, having seen it even in northern luxury, could partly enter, and marks it in several passages of his Italian plays. But if the reader still doubts his limitation to his own experience in all subjects of imagination, let him consider how the removal from mountain influence in his youth, so necessary for the perfection of his lower human sympathy, prevented him from ever rendering with any force the feelings of the mountain anchorite, or indicating in any of his monks the deep spirit of monasticism. Worldly cardinals or nuncios he can fathom to the uttermost; but where, in all his thoughts, do we find St. Francis, or Abbot Samson? The "Friar" of Shakspeare's plays is almost the only stage conventionalism which he admitted; generally nothing more than a weak old man, who lives in a cell, and has a rope about his waist.

While, finally, in such slight allusions as he makes to mountain scenery itself, it is very curious to observe the accurate limitation of his sympathies to such things as he had known in his youth; and his entire preference of human interest, and of courtly and kingly dignities, to the nobleness of the hills. This is most marked in Cymbeline, where the term "mountaineer" is, as with Dante, always one of reproach; and the noble birth of Arviragus and Guiderius is shown by their holding their mountain cave as

> A cell of ignorance; travelling abed.
> A prison for a debtor;

and themselves, educated among hills, as in all things contemptible:

> We are beastly; subtle as the fox, for prey;
> Like warlike as the wolf, for what we eat:
> Our valour is to chase what flies; our cage
> We make our choir, as doth the prisoned bird.

A few phrases occur here and there which might justify

the supposition that he had seen high mountains, but never implying awe or admiration. Thus Demetrius:

> These things seem *small* and *indistinguishable*,
> *Like far-off mountains turned into clouds.*

"Taurus snow," and the "frosty Caucasus," are used merely as types of purity or cold; and though the avalanche is once spoken of as an image of power, it is with instantly following depreciation:

> Rush on his host, as doth the melted snow
> Upon the vallies, whose low vassal seat
> The Alps doth spit, and void his rheum upon.

There was only one thing belonging to hills that Shakspeare seemed to feel as noble—the pine tree, and that was because he had seen it in Warwickshire, clumps of pine occasionally rising on little sandstone mounds, as at the place of execution of Piers Gaveston, above the lowland woods. He touches on this tree fondly again and again:

> As rough,
> Their royal blood enchafed, as the rud'st wind
> That by his top doth take the mountain pine,
> And make him stoop to the vale.

> The strong-based promontory
> Have I made shake, and by the spurs plucked up
> The pine and cedar.

Where note his observance of the peculiar horizontal roots of the pine, spurred as it is by them like the claw of a bird, and partly propped, as the aiguilles by those rock promontories at their bases which I have always called their spurs, this observance of the pine's strength and animal-like grasp being the chief reason for his choosing it, above other trees, for Ariel's prison. Again:

> You may as well forbid the mountain pines
> To wag their high tops, and to make no noise
> When they are fretted with the gusts of heaven.

And yet again:

> But when, from under this terrestrial ball,
> He fires the proud tops of the eastern pines.

We may judge, by the impression which this single feature of hill scenery seems to have made on Shakspeare's mind, because he had seen it in his youth, how his whole temper would have been changed if he had lived in a more sublime country, and how essential it was to his power of contemplation of mankind that he should be removed from the sterner influences of nature. For the rest, so far as Shakspeare's work has imperfections of any kind—the trivialness of many of his adopted plots, for instance, and the comparative rarity with which he admits the ideal of an enthusiastic virtue arising out of principle; virtue being with him, for the most part, founded simply on the affections joined with inherent purity in his women, or on mere manly pride and honour in his men[1]; in a word, whatever difference, involving inferiority, there exists between him and

[1] I mean that Shakspeare almost always implies a total difference in *nature* between one human being and another; one being from the birth, pure and affectionate, another base and cruel; and he displays each, in its sphere, as having the nature of dove, wolf, or lion, never much implying the government or change of nature by any external principle. There can be no question that in the main he is right in this view of human nature; still, the other form of virtue does exist occasionally, and was never, as far as I recollect, taken much note of by him. And with this stern view of humanity, Shakspeare joined a sorrowful view of Fate, closely resembling that of the ancients. He is distinguished from Dante eminently by his always dwelling on last causes instead of first causes. Dante invariably points to the moment of the soul's choice which fixed its fate, to the instant of the day when it read no farther, or determined to give bad advice about Penestrino. But Shakspeare always leans on the force of Fate, as it urges the final evil; and dwells with infinite bitterness on the power of the wicked, and the infinitude of result dependent seemingly on little things. A fool brings the last piece of news from Verona, and the dearest lives of its noble houses are lost; they might have been saved, if the sacristan had not stumbled as he walked. Othello mislays his handkerchief, and there remains nothing for him but death. Hamlet gets hold of the wrong foil, and the rest is silence. Edmund's runner is a moment too late at the prison, and the feather will not move at Cordelia's lips. Salisbury a moment too late at the tower, and Arthur lies on the stones dead. Goneril and Iago have on the whole, in this world, Shakspeare sees, much of their own way, though they come to a bad end. It is a pin that Death pierces the king's fortress wall with; and Carelessness and Folly sit sceptred and dreadful, side by side with the pin-armed skeleton.

Dante, in his conceptions of the relation between this world and the next, we may partly trace, as we did the difference between Bacon and Pascal, to the less noble character of the scenes around him in his youth; and admit that, though it was necessary for his special work that he should be put, as it were, on a level with his race, on those plains of Stratford, we should see in this a proof, instead of a negation, of the mountain power over human intellect. For breadth and perfectness of condescending sight, the Shakspearian mind stands alone; but in *ascending* sight it is limited. The breadth of grasp was innate; the stoop and slightness of it was given by the circumstances of scene: and the difference between those careless masques of heathen gods, or unbelieved, though mightily conceived visions of fairy, witch, or risen spirit, and the earnest faith of Dante's vision of Paradise, is the true measure of the difference in influence between the willowy banks of Avon, and the purple hills of Arno.

VOLUME V.

53. The Earth-Veil.

"To dress it and to keep it."

That, then, was to be our work. Alas! what work have we set ourselves upon instead! How have we ravaged the garden instead of kept it—feeding our war-horses with its flowers, and splintering its trees into spear-shafts!

"And at the East a flaming sword."

Is its flame quenchless? and are those gates that keep the way indeed passable no more? or is it not rather that we no more desire to enter? For what can we conceive of that first Eden which we might not yet win back, if we chose. It was a place full of flowers, we say. Well: the flowers are always striving to grow wherever we suffer them; and the fairer, the closer. There may indeed have been a Fall of Flowers, as a Fall of Man; but assuredly creatures such as we are can now fancy nothing lovelier than roses and lilies, which would grow for us side by side, leaf overlapping leaf, till the earth was white and red with them, if we cared to have it so. And Paradise was full of pleasant shades and fruitful avenues. Well: what hinders us from covering as much of the world as we like with pleasant shade and pure blossom, and goodly fruit? Who forbids its valleys to be covered over with corn, till they laugh and sing? Who prevents its dark forests, ghostly and uninhabitable, from being changed into infinite orchards, wreathing the hills with frail-floretted snow, far away to the half-lighted horizon of April, and flushing the face of all the autumnal earth with glow of clustered food? But Paradise was a place of peace, we say, and all the animals were gentle servants to us. Well: the

world would yet be a place of peace if we were all peace-makers, and gentle service should we have of its creatures if we gave them gentle mastery. But so long as we make sport of slaying bird and beast, so long as we choose to contend rather with our fellows than with our faults, and make battlefield of our meadows instead of pasture—so long, truly, the Flaming Sword will still turn every way, and the gates of Eden remain barred close enough, till we have sheathed the sharper flame of our own passions, and broken down the closer gates of our own hearts.

I have been led to see and feel this more and more, as I considered the service which the flowers and trees, which man was at first appointed to keep, were intended to render to him in return for his care; and the services they still render to him, as far as he allows their influence, or fulfils his own task towards them. For what infinite wonderfulness there is in this vegetation, considered, as indeed it is, the means by which the earth becomes the companion of man—his friend and his teacher! In the conditions which we have traced in its rocks, there could only be seen preparation for his existence;—the characters which enable him to live on it safely, and to work with it easily—in all these it has been inanimate and passive; but vegetation is to it as an imperfect soul, given to meet the soul of man. The earth in its depths must remain dead and cold, incapable except of slow crystalline change; but at its surface, which human beings look upon and deal with, it ministers to them through a veil of strange intermediate being; which breathes, but has no voice; moves, but cannot leave its appointed place; passes through life without consciousness, to death without bitterness; wears the beauty of youth, without its passion; and declines to the weakness of age, without its regret.

And in this mystery of intermediate being, entirely subordinate to us, with which we can deal as we choose, having just the greater power as we have the less responsibility for our treatment of the unsuffering creature, most of the pleasures which we need from the external world are gathered, and most of the lessons we need are written, all kinds of precious grace and teaching being united in this

link between the Earth and Man: wonderful in universal adaptation to his need, desire, and discipline; God's daily preparation of the earth for him, with beautiful means of life. First, a carpet to make it soft for him; then, a coloured fantasy of embroidery thereon; then, tall spreading of foliage to shade him from sun-heat, and shade also the fallen rain, that it may not dry quickly back into the clouds, but stay to nourish the springs among the moss. Stout wood to bear this leafage: easily to be cut, yet tough and light, to make houses for him, or instruments (lance-shaft, or plough-handle, according to his temper); useless it had been, if harder; useless, if less fibrous; useless, if less elastic. Winter comes, and the shade of leafage falls away, to let the sun warm the earth; the strong boughs remain, breaking the strength of winter winds. The seeds which are to prolong the race, innumerable according to the need, are made beautiful and palatable, varied into infinitude of appeal to the fancy of man, or provision for his service: cold juice, or glowing spice, or balm, or incense, softening oil, preserving resin, medicine of styptic, febrifuge, or lulling charm: and all these presented in forms of endless change. Fragility or force, softness and strength, in all degrees and aspects; unerring uprightness, as of temple pillars, or undivided wandering of feeble tendrils on the ground; mighty resistances of rigid arm and limb to the storms of ages, or wavings to and fro with faintest pulse of summer streamlet. Roots cleaving the strength of rock, or binding the transience of the sand; crests basking in sunshine of the desert, or hiding by dripping spring and lightless cave; foliage far tossing in entangled fields beneath every wave of ocean—clothing with variegated, everlasting films, the peaks of the trackless mountains, or ministering at cottage doors to every gentlest passion and simplest joy of humanity.

Being thus prepared for us in all ways, and made beautiful, and good for food, and for building, and for instruments of our hands, this race of plants, deserving boundless affection and admiration from us, become, in proportion to their obtaining it, a nearly perfect test of our being in right temper of mind and way of life; so that no one can be far

wrong in either who loves the trees enough, and every one is assuredly wrong in both, who does not love them, if his life has brought them in his way. It is clearly possible to do without them, for the great companionship of the sea and sky are all that sailors need; and many a noble heart has been taught the best it had to learn between dark stone walls. Still if human life be cast among trees at all, the love borne to them is a sure test of its purity. And it is a sorrowful proof of the mistaken ways of the world that the "country," in the simple sense of a place of fields and trees, has hitherto been the source of reproach to its inhabitants, and that the words "countryman, rustic, clown, *paysan*, villager," still signify a rude and untaught person, as opposed to the words "townsman" and "citizen." We accept this usage of words, or the evil which it signifies, somewhat too quietly; as if it were quite necessary and natural that country-people should be rude, and townspeople gentle. Whereas I believe that the result of each mode of life may, in some stages of the world's progress, be the exact reverse; and that another use of words may be forced upon us by a new aspect of facts, so that we may find ourselves saying "Such and such a person is very gentle and kind—he is quite rustic; and such and such another person is very rude and ill-taught—he is quite urbane."

At all events, cities have hitherto gained the better part of their good report through our evil ways of going on in the world generally—chiefly and eminently through our bad habit of fighting with each other. No field, in the middle ages, being safe from devastation, and every country lane yielding easier passage to the marauders, peacefully-minded men necessarily congregated in cities, and walled themselves in, making as few cross-country roads as possible: while the men who sowed and reaped the harvests of Europe were only the servants or slaves of the barons. The disdain of all agricultural pursuits by the nobility, and of all plain facts by the monks, kept educated Europe in a state of mind over which natural phenomena could have no power; body and intellect being lost in the practice of war without purpose, and the meditation of words without meaning. Men learned

the dexterity with sword and syllogism, which they mistook for education, within cloister and tilt-yard; and looked on all the broad space of the world of God mainly as a place for exercise of horses, or for growth of food.

54. The Leaf Orders.

A CHILD'S division of plants is into "trees and flowers." If, however, we were to take him in spring, after he had gathered his lapful of daisies, from the lawn into the orchard, and ask him how he would call those wreaths of richer floret, whose frail petals tossed their foam of promise between him and the sky, he would at once see the need of some intermediate name, and call them, perhaps, "tree-flowers." If, then, we took him to a birch-wood, and showed him that catkins were flowers, as well as cherry-blossoms, he might, with a little help, reach so far as to divide all flowers into two classes: one, those that grew on ground; and another, those that grew on trees. The botanist might smile at such a division; but an artist would not. To him, as to the child, there is something specific and distinctive in those rough trunks that carry the higher flowers. To him, it makes the main difference between one plant and another, whether it is to tell as a light upon the ground, or as a shade upon the sky. And if, after this, we asked for a little help from the botanist, and he were to lead us, leaving the blossoms, to look more carefully at leaves and buds, we should find ourselves able in some sort to justify, even to him, our childish classification. For our present purposes, justifiable or not, it is the most suggestive and convenient. Plants are, indeed, broadly referable to two great classes. The first we may, perhaps, not inexpediently call TENTED PLANTS. They live in encampments, on the ground, as lilies; or on surfaces of rock, or stems of other plants, as lichens and mosses. They live—some for a year, some for many years, some for myriads of years; but, perishing, they pass as the tented Arab passes: they leave *no memorials of themselves*, except the seed, or bulb, or root which is to perpetuate the race.

The other great class of plants we may perhaps best call BUILDING PLANTS. These will *not* live on the ground, but eagerly raise edifices above it. Each works hard with solemn forethought all its life. Perishing, it leaves its work in the form which will be most useful to its successors—its own monument, and their inheritance. These architectural edifices we call "Trees."

It may be thought that this nomenclature already involves a theory. But I care about neither the nomenclature, nor about anything questionable in my description of the classes. The reader is welcome to give them what names he likes, and to render what account of them he thinks fittest. But to us, as artists, or lovers of art, this is the first and most vital question concerning a plant: "Has it a fixed form or a changing one? Shall I find it always as I do to-day—this *Parnassia palustris*—with one leaf and one flower? or may it some day have incalculable pomp of leaves and unmeasured treasure of flowers? Will it rise only to the height of a man—as an ear of corn—and perish like a man; or will it spread its boughs to the sea and branches to the river, and enlarge its circle of shade in heaven for a thousand years?"

This, I repeat, is the *first* question I ask the plant. And as it answers, I range it on one side or the other, among those that rest or those that toil: tent-dwellers, who toil not, neither do they spin; or tree-builders, whose days are as the days of a people. I find again, on farther questioning these plants who rest, that one group of them does indeed rest always, contentedly, on the ground, but that those of another group, more ambitious, emulate the builders; and though they cannot build rightly, raise for themselves pillars out of the remains of past generations, on which they themselves, living the life of St. Simeon Stylites, are called, by courtesy, Trees; being, in fact, many of them (palms, for instance) quite as stately as real trees.[1]

[1] I am not sure that this is a fair account of palms. I have never had opportunity of studying stems of Endogens, and I cannot understand the descriptions given of them in books, nor do I know how far some of their branched conditions approximate to real tree-structure. If this work, whatever errors it may involve, provokes the curiosity of the

These two classes we might call earth-plants, and pillar-plants.

Again, in questioning the true builders as to their modes of work, I find that they also are divisible into two great classes. Without in the least wishing the reader to accept the fanciful nomenclature, I think he may yet most conveniently remember these as "Builders with the shield," and "Builders with the sword."

Builders with the shield have expanded leaves, more or less resembling shields, partly in shape, but still more in office; for under their lifted shadow the young bud of the next year is kept from harm. These are the gentlest of the builders, and live in pleasant places, providing food and shelter for man. Builders with the sword, on the contrary, have sharp leaves in the shape of swords, and the young buds, instead of being as numerous as the leaves, crouching each under a leaf-shadow, are few in number, and grow fearlessly, each in the midst of a sheaf of swords. These builders live in savage places, are sternly dark in colour, and though they give much help to man by their merely physical strength, they (with few exceptions) give him no food, and imperfect shelter. Their mode of building is ruder than that of the shield-builders, and they in many ways resemble the pillar-plants of the opposite order. We call them generally "Pines."

55. The Living Tree.

THE leaves, as we shall see immediately, are the feeders of the plant. Their own orderly habits of succession must not interfere with their main business of finding food. Where the sun and air are, the leaf must go, whether it be out of order or not. So, therefore, in any group, the first consideration with the young leaves is much like that of young bees, how to keep out of each other's way, that every one may at once leave its neighbours as much free-air pasture

reader so as to lead him to seek for more and better knowledge, it will do all the service I hope from it.

as possible, and obtain a relative freedom for itself. This would be a quite simple matter, and produce other simply balanced forms, if each branch, with open air all round it, had nothing to think of but reconcilement of interests among its own leaves. But every branch has others to meet or to cross, sharing with them, in various advantage, what shade, or sun, or rain is to be had. Hence every single leaf-cluster presents the general aspect of a little family, entirely at unity among themselves, but obliged to get their living by various shifts, concessions, and infringements of the family rules, in order not to invade the privileges of other people in their neighbourhood.

And in the arrangement of these concessions there is an exquisite sensibility among the leaves. They do not grow each to his own liking, till they run against one another, and then turn back sulkily; but by a watchful instinct, far apart, they anticipate their companions' courses, as ships at sea, and in every new unfolding of their edged tissue, guide themselves by the sense of each other's remote presence, and by a watchful penetration of leafy purpose in the far future. So that every shadow which one casts on the next, and every glint of sun which each reflects to the next, and every touch which in toss of storm each receives from the next, aid or arrest the development of their advancing form, and direct, as will be safest and best, the curve of every fold and the current of every vein.

* * * * * *

When, some few years ago, the pre-Raphaelites began to lead our wandering artists back into the eternal paths of all great Art, and showed that whatever men drew at all, ought to be drawn accurately and knowingly; not blunderingly nor by guess (leaves of trees, among other things): as ignorant pride on the one hand refused their teaching, ignorant hope caught at it on the other. "What!" said many a feeble young student to himself; "painting is not a matter of science then, nor of supreme skill, nor of inventive brain. I have only to go and paint the leaves of the trees as they grow, and I shall produce beautiful landscapes directly."

Alas! my innocent young friend. "Paint the leaves as

they grow!" If you can paint *one* leaf, you can paint the world. These pre-Raphaelite laws, which you think so light, lay stern on the strength of Apelles and Zeuxis; put Titian to thoughtful trouble; are unrelaxed yet, and unrelaxable for ever. Paint a leaf indeed! Above-named Titian has done it: Correggio, moreover, and Giorgione: and Leonardo, very nearly, trying hard. Holbein, three or four times, in precious pieces, highest wrought. Raphael, it may be, in one or two crowns of Muse or Sibyl. If any one else, in later times, we have to consider.

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It is evident that the more leaves the stalk has to sustain, the more strength it requires. It might appear, therefore, not unadvisable that every leaf should, as it grew, pay a small tax to the stalk for its sustenance; so that there might be no fear of any number of leaves being too oppressive to their bearer. Which, accordingly, is just what the leaves do. Each, from the moment of his complete majority, pays a stated tax to the stalk; that is to say, collects for it a certain quantity of wood, or materials for wood, and sends this wood, or what ultimately will become wood, *down* the stalk to add to its thickness.

"Down the stalk?"—yes, and down a great way farther. For, as the leaves, if they did not thus contribute to their own support, would soon be too heavy for the spray, so if the spray, with its family of leaves, contributed nothing to the thickness of the branch, the leaf-families would soon break down their sustaining branches. And, similarly, if the branches gave nothing to the stem, the stem would soon fall under its boughs. Therefore, by a power of which I believe no sufficient account exists, as each leaf adds to the thickness of the shoot, so each shoot to the branch, so each branch to the stem, and that with so perfect an order and regularity of duty, that from every leaf in all the countless crowd at the tree's summit, one slender fibre, or at least fibre's thickness of wood, descends through shoot, through spray, through branch, and through stem; and having thus added, in its due proportion, to form the strength of the tree, labours yet farther and more painfully to provide for its

security; and thrusting forward into the root, loses nothing of its mighty energy, until, running through the darkness, it has taken hold in cleft of rock or depth of earth, as extended as the sweep of its green crest in the free air.

Such at least is the mechanical aspect of the tree. The work of its construction, considered as a branched tower, partly propped by buttresses, partly lashed by cables, is thus shared in by every leaf. But considering it as a living body to be nourished, it is probably an inaccurate analogy to speak of the leaves being taxed for the enlargement of the trunk. Strictly speaking, the trunk enlarges by sustaining them. For each leaf, however far removed from the ground, stands in need of nourishment derived from the ground, as well as of that which it finds in the air; and it simply sends its root down along the stem of the tree, until it reaches the ground and obtains the necessary mineral elements. The trunk has been therefore called by some botanists a "bundle of roots," but I think inaccurately. It is rather a messenger to the roots. A root, properly so called, is a fibre, spongy or absorbent at the extremity, which secretes certain elements from the earth. The stem is by this definition no more a cluster of roots than a cluster of leaves, but a channel of intercourse between the roots and the leaves. It can gather no nourishment. It only carries nourishment, being, in fact, a group of canals for the conveyance of marketable commodities, with an electric telegraph attached to each, transmitting messages from leaf to root, and root to leaf, up and down the tree. But whatever view we take of the operative causes, the external and visible fact is simply that every leaf does send down from its stalk a slender thread of woody matter along the side of the shoot it grows upon; and that the increase of thickness in stem, proportioned to the advance of the leaves, corresponds with an increase of thickness in roots, proportioned to the advance of their outer fibres. How far interchange of elements takes place between root and leaf, it is not our work here to examine; the general and broad idea is this, that the whole tree is fed partly by the earth, partly by the air—strengthened and sustained by the one, agitated

and educated by the other—all of it which is best, in substance, life, and beauty, being drawn more from the dew of heaven than the fatness of the earth.

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Perhaps nothing is more curious in the history of human mind than the way in which the science of botany has become oppressed by nomenclature. Here is perhaps the first question which an intelligent child would think of asking about a tree: "Mamma, how does it make its trunk?"—and you may open one botanical work after another, and good ones too, and by sensible men—you shall not find this child's question fairly put, much less fairly answered. You will be told gravely that a stem has received many names, such as *culmus*, *stipes*, and *truncus;* that twigs were once called *flagella*, but are now called *ramuli;* and that Mr. Link calls a straight stem, with branches on its sides, a *caulis excurrens;* and a stem, which at a certain distance above the earth breaks out into irregular ramifications, a *caulis deliquescens*. All thanks and honour be to Mr. Link! But at this moment, when we want to know *why* one stem breaks out "at a certain distance," and the other not at all, we find no great help in those splendid excurrencies and deliquescencies. "At a certain distance?" Yes: but why not before? or why then? How was it that, for many and many a year, the young shoots agreed to construct a vertical tower, or, at least, the nucleus of one, and then, one merry day, changed their minds, and built about their metropolis in all directions, nobody knows where, far into the air in free delight? How is it that yonder larch-stem grows straight and true, while all its branches, constructed by the same process as the mother trunk, and under the mother trunk's careful inspection and direction, nevertheless have lost all their manners, and go forking and flashing about, more like cracklings of spitefullest lightning than decent branches of trees that dip green leaves in dew?

We have probably, many of us, missed the point of such questions as these, because we too readily associated the structure of trees with that of flowers. The flowering part of a plant shoots out or up, in some given direction, until, at

a stated period, it opens or branches into perfect form by a law just as fixed, and just as inexplicable, as that which numbers the joints of an animal's skeleton, and puts the head on its right joint. In many forms of flowers—foxglove, aloe, hemlock, or blossom of maize—the structure of the flowering part so far assimilates itself to that of a tree, that we not unnaturally think of a tree only as a large flower, or large remnant of flower, run to seed. And we suppose the time and place of its branching to be just as organically determined as the height of the stalk of straw, or hemlock pipe, and the fashion of its branching just as fixed as the shape of petals in a pansy or cowslip.

But that is not so; not so in anywise. So far as you can watch a tree, it is produced throughout by repetitions of the same process, which repetitions, however, are arbitrarily directed so as to produce one effect at one time, and another at another time. A young sapling has his branches as much as the tall tree. He does not shoot up in a long thin rod, and begin to branch when he is ten or fifteen feet high, as the hemlock or foxglove does when each has reached its ten or fifteen inches. The young sapling conducts himself with all the dignity of a tree from the first;—only he so manages his branches as to form a support for his future life, in a strong straight trunk, that will hold him well off the ground. Prudent little sapling!—but how does he manage this? how keep the young branches from rambling about, till the proper time, or on what plea dismiss them from his service if they will not help his provident purpose? So again, there is no difference in mode of construction between the trunk of a pine and its branch. But external circumstances so far interfere with the results of this repeated construction, that a stone pine rises for a hundred feet like a pillar, and then suddenly bursts into a cloud. It is the knowledge of the mode in which such change may take place which forms the true natural history of trees; or, more accurately, their moral history. An animal is born with so many limbs, and a head of such a shape. That is, strictly speaking, not its history, but one fact in its history: a fact of which no other account can be given than that it

was so appointed. But a tree is born without a head. It has got to make its own head. It is born like a little family from which a great nation is to spring; and at a certain time, under peculiar external circumstances, this nation, every individual of which remains the same in nature and temper, yet gives itself a new political constitution, and sends out branch colonies, which enforce forms of law and life entirely different from those of the parent state. That is the history of the state. It is also the history of a tree.

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We men, sometimes, in what we presume to be humility, compare ourselves with leaves; but we have as yet no right to do so. The leaves may well scorn the comparison. We, who live for ourselves, and neither know how to use nor keep the work of past time, may humbly learn—as from the ant, foresight—from the leaf, reverence. The power of every great people, as of every living tree, depends on its not effacing, but confirming and concluding, the labours of its ancestors. Looking back to the history of nations, we may date the beginning of their decline from the moment when they ceased to be reverent in heart, and accumulative in hand and brain; from the moment when the redundant fruit of age hid in them the hollowness of heart, whence the simplicities of custom and sinews of tradition had withered away. Had men but guarded the righteous laws, and protected the precious works of their fathers, with half the industry they have given to change and to ravage, they would not now have been seeking vainly, in millennial visions and mechanic servitudes, the accomplishment of the promise made to them so long ago: "As the days of a tree are the days of my people, and mine elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands; they shall not labour in vain, nor bring forth for trouble; for they are the seed of the blessed of the Lord, and their offspring with them."

This lesson we have to take from the leaf's life. One more we may receive from its death. If ever in autumn a pensiveness falls upon us as the leaves drift by in their fading, may we not wisely look up in hope to their mighty monuments? Behold how fair, how far prolonged, in arch

and aisle, the avenues of the valleys; the fringes of the hills! So stately, so eternal: the joy of man, the comfort of all living creatures, the glory of the earth—they are but the monuments of those poor leaves that flit faintly past us to die. Let them not pass, without our understanding their last counsel and example: that we also, careless of monument by the grave, may build it in the world—monument by which men may be taught to remember, not where we died, but where we lived.

56. The Character of the Pine.

Of the many marked adaptations of nature to the mind of man, it seems one of the most singular, that trees intended especially for the adornment of the wildest mountains should be in broad outline the most formal of trees. The vine, which is to be the companion of man, is waywardly docile in its growth, falling into festoons beside his corn-fields, or roofing his garden-walks, or casting its shadow all summer upon his door. Associated always with the trimness of cultivation, it introduces all possible elements of sweet wildness. The pine, placed nearly always among scenes disordered and desolate, brings into them all possible elements of order and precision. Lowland trees may lean to this side and that, though it is but a meadow breeze that bends them, or a bank of cowslips from which their trunks lean aslope. But let storm and avalanche do their worst, and let the pine find only a ledge of vertical precipice to cling to, it will nevertheless grow straight. Thrust a rod from its last shoot down the stem; it shall point to the centre of the earth as long as the tree lives.

Also it may be well for lowland branches to reach hither and thither for what they need, and to take all kinds of irregular shape and extension. But the pine is trained to need nothing, and to endure everything. It is resolvedly whole, self-contained, desiring nothing but rightness, content with restricted completion. Tall or short, it will be straight. Small or large, it will be round. It may be permitted also

to these soft lowland trees that they should make themselves gay with show of blossom, and glad with pretty charities of fruitfulness. We builders with the sword have harder work to do for man, and must do it in close-set troops. To stay the sliding of the mountain snows, which would bury him; to hold in divided drops, at our sword-points, the rain, which would sweep away him and his treasure-fields; to nurse in shade among our brown fallen leaves the tricklings that feed the brooks in drought; to give massive shield against the winter wind, which shrieks through the bare branches of the plain: such service must we do him stedfastly while we live. Our bodies, also, are at his service: softer than the bodies of other trees, though our toil is harder than theirs. Let him take them as pleases him, for his houses and ships. So also it may be well for these timid lowland trees to tremble with all their leaves, or turn their paleness to the sky, if but a rush of rain passes by them; or to let fall their leaves at last, sick and sere. But we pines must live carelessly amidst the wrath of clouds. We only wave our branches to and fro when the storm pleads with us, as men toss their arms in a dream.

And finally, these weak lowland trees may struggle fondly for the last remnants of life, and send up feeble saplings again from their roots when they are cut down. But we builders with the sword perish boldly; our dying shall be perfect and solemn, as our warring: we give up our lives without reluctance, and for ever.[1]

I wish the reader to fix his attention for a moment on these two great characters of the pine, its straightness and rounded perfectness; both wonderful, and in their issue lovely, though they have hitherto prevented the tree from being drawn. I say, first, its straightness. Because we constantly see it in the wildest scenery, we are apt to remember only as characteristic examples of it those which have been disturbed by violent accident or disease. Of course such instances are frequent. The soil of the pine is

[1] "Crœsus, therefore, having heard these things, sent word to the people of Lampsacus that they should let Miltiades go; and, if not, he would cut them down like a pine-tree."—*Herodotus*, vi. 37.

subject to continual change; perhaps the rock in which it is rooted splits in frost and falls forward, throwing the young stems aslope, or the whole mass of earth round it is undermined by rain, or a huge boulder falls on its stem from above, and forces it for twenty years to grow with weight of a couple of tons leaning on its side. Hence, especially at edges of loose cliffs, about waterfalls, or at glacier banks, and in other places liable to disturbance, the pine may be seen distorted and oblique; and in Turner's "Source of the Arveron" he has, with his usual unerring perception of the main point in any matter, fastened on this means of relating the glacier's history. The glacier cannot explain its own motion; and ordinary observers saw in it only its rigidity; but Turner saw that the wonderful thing was its non-rigidity. Other ice is fixed, only this ice stirs. All the banks are staggering beneath its waves, crumbling and withered as by the blast of a perpetual storm. He made the rocks of his foreground loose—rolling and tottering down together; the pines smitten aside by them, their tops dead, bared by the ice wind.

Nevertheless, this is not the truest or universal expression of the pine's character. I said long ago, even of Turner: "Into the spirit of the pine he cannot enter." He understood the glacier at once; he had seen the force of sea on shore too often to miss the action of those crystal-crested waves. But the pine was strange to him, adverse to his delight in broad and flowing line; he refused its magnificent erectness. Magnificent!—nay, sometimes, almost terrible. Other trees, tufting crag or hill, yield to the form and sway of the ground, clothe it with soft compliance, are partly its subjects, partly its flatterers, partly its comforters. But the pine rises in serene resistance, self-contained; nor can I ever without awe stay long under a great Alpine cliff, far from all house or work of men, looking up to its companies of pine, as they stand on the inaccessible juts and perilous ledges of the enormous wall, in quiet multitudes, each like the shadow of the one beside it—upright, fixed, spectral, as troop of ghosts standing on the walls of Hades, not knowing each other—dumb for ever. You cannot reach them, cannot cry

to them; those trees never heard human voice; they are far above all sound but of the winds. No foot ever stirred fallen leaf of theirs. All comfortless they stand, between the two eternities of the Vacancy and the Rock: yet with such iron will, that the rock itself looks bent and shattered beside them—fragile, weak, inconsistent, compared to their dark energy of delicate life, and monotony of enchanted pride: unnumbered, unconquerable.

Then note, farther, their perfectness. The impression on most people's minds must have been received more from pictures than reality, so far as I can judge; so ragged they think the pine; whereas its chief character in health is green and full roundness. It stands compact, like one of its own cones, slightly curved on its sides, finished and quaint as a carved tree in some Elizabethan garden; and instead of being wild in expression, forms the softest of all forest scenery; for other trees show their trunks and twisting boughs: but the pine, growing either in luxuriant mass or in happy isolation, allows no branch to be seen. Summit behind summit rise its pyramidal ranges, or down to the very grass sweep the circlets of its boughs; so that there is nothing but green cone and green carpet. Nor is it only softer, but in one sense more cheerful than other foliage; for it casts only a pyramidal shadow. Lowland forest arches overhead, and chequers the ground with darkness; but the pine, growing in scattered groups, leaves the glades between emerald-bright. Its gloom is all its own; narrowing into the sky, it lets the sunshine strike down to the dew. And if ever a superstitious feeling comes over me among the pine-glades, it is never tainted with the old German forest fear; but is only a more solemn tone of the fairy enchantment that haunts our English meadows; so that I have always called the prettiest pine glade in Chamouni "Fairies' Hollow." It is in the glen beneath the steep ascent above Pont Pelissier, and may be reached by a little winding path which goes down from the top of the hill; being, indeed, not truly a glen, but a broad ledge of moss and turf, leaning in a formidable precipice (which, however, the gentle branches hide) over the Arve. An almost isolated rock promontory,

many-coloured, rises at the end of it. On the other sides it is bordered by cliffs, from which a little cascade falls, literally, down among the pines, for it is so light, shaking itself into mere showers of seed pearl in the sun, that the pines don't know it from mist, and grow through it without minding. Underneath, there is only the mossy silence, and above, for ever, the snow of the nameless Aiguille.

And then the third character which I want you to notice in the pine is its exquisite fineness. Other trees rise against the sky in dots and knots, but this in fringes.[1] You never see the edges of it, so subtle are they; and for this reason, it alone of trees, so far as I know, is capable of the fiery change which we saw before had been noticed by Shakspeare. When the sun rises behind a ridge crested with pine, provided the ridge be at a distance of about two miles, and seen clear, all the trees, for about three or four degrees on each side of the sun, become trees of light, seen in clear flame against the darker sky, and dazzling as the sun itself.

[1] Keats (as is his way) puts nearly all that may be said of the pine into one verse, though they are only figurative pines of which he is speaking. I have come to that pass of admiration for him now, that I dare not read him, so discontented he makes me with my own work: but others must not leave unread, in considering the influence of trees upon the human soul, that marvellous *Ode to Psyche*. Here is the piece about pines:

> Yes, I will be thy priest, and build a fane
> In some untrodden region of my mind,
> Where branchèd thoughts, new grown with pleasant pain,
> Instead of pines, shall murmur in the wind:
> Far, far around shall those dark-clustered trees
> *Fledge the wild-ridged mountains*, steep by steep;
> And there by zephyrs, streams, and birds, and bees,
> The moss-lain Dryads shall be lulled to sleep;
> And in the midst of this wide quietness
> A rosy sanctuary will I dress
> With the wreathed trellis of a working brain,
> With buds, and bells, and stars without a name,
> With all the Gardener Fancy e'er could feign,
> Who, breeding flowers, will never breed the same.
> And there shall be for thee all soft delight
> That shadowy thought can win;
> A bright torch, and a casement ope, at night,
> To let the warm Love in.

I thought at first this was owing to the actual lustre of the leaves; but I believe now it is caused by the cloud-dew upon them—every minutest leaf carrying its diamond. It seems as if these trees, living always among the clouds, had caught part of their glory from them; and themselves the darkest of vegetation, could yet add splendour to the sun itself.

Yet I have been more struck by their character of finished delicacy at a distance from the central Alps, among the pastoral hills of the Emmenthal, or lowland districts of Berne, where they are set in groups between the cottages, whose shingle roofs (they also of pine) of deep grey blue, and lightly carved fronts, golden and orange in the autumn sunshine,[1] gleam on the banks and lawns of hill-side—endless lawns, mounded, and studded, and bossed all over with deeper green hay-heaps, orderly set, like jewellery (the mountain hay, when the pastures are full of springs, being strangely dark and fresh in verdure for a whole day after it is cut). And amidst this delicate delight of cottage and field, the young pines stand delicatest of all, scented as with frankincense, their slender stems straight as arrows, and crystal white, looking as if they would break with a touch, like needles; and their arabesques of dark leaf pierced through and through by the pale radiance of clear sky, opal blue, where they follow each other along the soft hill-ridges, up and down.

I have watched them in such scenes with the deeper interest, because of all trees they have hitherto had most influence on human character. The effect of other vegetation, however great, has been divided by mingled species; elm and oak in England, poplar in France, birch in Scotland, olive in Italy and Spain, share their power with inferior trees, and with all the changing charm of successive agriculture. But the tremendous unity of the pine absorbs and moulds the life of a race. The pine shadows rest upon a nation. The Northern peoples, century after century,

[1] There has been much cottage-building about the hills lately, with very pretty carving, the skill in which has been encouraged by travellers; and the fresh-cut larch is splendid in colour under rosy sunlight.

lived under one or other of the two great powers of the Pine and the Sea, both infinite. They dwelt amidst the forests, as they wandered on the waves, and saw no end, nor any other horizon;—still the dark green trees, or the dark green waters, jagged the dawn with their fringe, or their foam. And whatever elements of imagination, or of warrior strength, or of domestic justice, were brought down by the Norwegian and the Goth against the dissoluteness or degradation of the South of Europe, were taught them under the green roofs and wild penetralia of the pine.

I do not attempt, delightful as the task would be, to trace this influence (mixed with superstition) in Scandinavia, or North Germany; but let us at least note it in the instance which we speak of so frequently, yet so seldom take to heart. There has been much dispute respecting the character of the Swiss, arising out of the difficulty which other nations had to understand their simplicity. They were assumed to be either romantically virtuous, or basely mercenary, when in fact they were neither heroic nor base, but were true-hearted men, stubborn with more than any recorded stubbornness; not much regarding their lives, yet not casting them causelessly away; forming no high ideal of improvement, but never relaxing their grasp of a good they had once gained; devoid of all romantic sentiment, yet loving with a practical and patient love that neither wearied nor forsook; little given to enthusiasm in religion, but maintaining their faith in a purity which no worldliness deadened and no hypocrisy soiled; neither chivalrously generous nor pathetically humane, yet never pursuing their defeated enemies, nor suffering their poor to perish; proud, yet not allowing their pride to prick them into unwary or unworthy quarrel; avaricious, yet contentedly rendering to their neighbour his due; dull, but clear-sighted to all the principles of justice; and patient, without ever allowing delay to be prolonged by sloth, or forbearance by fear.

This temper of Swiss mind, while it animated the whole confederacy, was rooted chiefly in one small district which formed the heart of their country, yet lay not among its highest mountains. Beneath the glaciers of Zermatt and

Evolena, and on the scorching slopes of the Valais, the peasants remained in an aimless torpor, unheard of but as the obedient vassals of the great Bishopric of Sion. But where the lower ledges of calcareous rock were broken by the inlets of the Lake Lucerne, and bracing winds penetrating from the north forbade the growth of the vine, compelling the peasantry to adopt an entirely pastoral life, was reared another race of men. Their narrow domain should be marked by a small green spot on every map of Europe. It is about forty miles from east to west; as many from north to south: yet on that shred of rugged ground, while every kingdom of the world around it rose or fell in fatal change, and every multitudinous race mingled or wasted itself in various dispersion and decline, the simple shepherd dynasty remained changeless. There is no record of their origin. They are neither Goths, Burgundians, Romans, nor Germans. They have been for ever Helvetii, and for ever free. Voluntarily placing themselves under the protection of the House of Habsburg, they acknowledged its supremacy, but resisted its oppression; and rose against the unjust governors it appointed over them, not to gain, but to redeem, their liberties. Victorious in the struggle by the Lake of Egeri, they stood the foremost standard-bearers among the nations of Europe in the cause of loyalty and life—loyalty in its highest sense, to the laws of God's helpful justice, and of man's faithful and brotherly fortitude.

You will find among them, as I said, no subtle wit nor high enthusiasm, only an undeceivable common sense, and an obstinate rectitude. They cannot be persuaded into their duties, but they feel them; they use no phrases of friendship, but do not fail you at your need. Questions of creed, which other nations sought to solve by logic or reverie, these shepherds brought to practical tests: sustained with tranquillity the excommunication of abbots who wanted to feed their cattle on other people's fields, and, halbert in hand, struck down the Swiss Reformation, because the Evangelicals of Zurich refused to send them their due supplies of salt. Not readily yielding to the demands of superstition, they were patient under those of

economy; they would purchase the remission of taxes, but not of sins; and while the sale of indulgences was arrested in the church of Ensiedlen as boldly as at the gates of Wittenberg, the inhabitants of the valley of Frutigen[1] ate no meat for seven years, in order peacefully to free themselves and their descendants from the seigniorial claims of the Baron of Thurm.

What praise may be justly due to this modest and rational virtue, we have perhaps no sufficient grounds for defining. It must long remain questionable how far the vices of superior civilization may be atoned for by its achievements, and the errors of more transcendental devotion forgiven to its rapture. But, take it for what we may, the character of this peasantry is, at least, serviceable to others and sufficient for their own peace; and in its consistency and simplicity, it stands alone in the history of the human heart. How far it was developed by circumstances of natural phenomena may also be disputed; nor should I enter into such dispute with any strongly held conviction. The Swiss have certainly no feelings respecting their mountains in anywise correspondent to ours. It was rather as fortresses of defence, than as spectacles of splendour, that the cliffs of the Rothstock bare rule over the destinies of those who dwelt at their feet; and the training for which the mountain children had to thank the slopes of the Muotta-Thal, was in soundness of breath, and steadiness of limb, far more than in elevation of idea. But the point which I desire the reader to note is, that the character of the scene which, if any, appears to have been impressive to the inhabitant, is not that which we ourselves feel when we enter the district. It was not from their lakes, nor their cliffs, nor their glaciers—though these were all peculiarly their possession—that the three venerable cantons or states received their name. They were not called the States of the Rock, nor the States of the Lake, but the States of the *Forest*. And the one of the three which contains the most touching record of the spiritual power of Swiss religion, in the name of the convent of the "Hill of

[1] This valley is on the pass of the Gemmi in Canton Berne, but the people are the same in temper as those of the Waldstetten.

Angels," has, for its own, none but the sweet childish name of "Under the Woods."

And indeed you may pass under them if, leaving the most sacred spot in Swiss history, the Meadow of the Three Fountains, you bid the boatman row southward a little way by the shore of the Bay of Uri. Steepest there on its western side, the walls of its rocks ascend to heaven. Far in the blue of evening, like a great cathedral pavement, lies the lake in its darkness; and you may hear the whisper of innumerable falling waters return from the hollows of the cliff, like the voices of a multitude praying under their breath. From time to time the beat of a wave, slow lifted, where the rocks lean over the black depth, dies heavily as the last note of a requiem. Opposite, green with steep grass, and set with chalet villages, the Fron-Alp rises in one solemn glow of pastoral light and peace; and above, against the clouds of twilight, ghostly on the grey precipice, stand, myriad by myriad, the shadowy armies of the Unterwalden pine.[1]

I have seen that it is possible for the stranger to pass through this great chapel, with its font of waters, and mountain pillars, and vaults of cloud, without being touched by one noble thought, or stirred by any sacred passion; but for those who received from its waves the baptism of their youth, and learned beneath its rocks the fidelity of their manhood, and watched amidst its clouds the likeness of the dream of life, with the eyes of age—for these I will not believe that the mountain shrine was built, or the calm of its forest-shadows guarded by their God, in vain.

57. The Angel of the Sea.

THE climates or lands into which our globe is divided may, with respect to their fitness for Art, be perhaps conveniently ranged under five heads:

[1] The cliff immediately bordering the lake is in Canton Uri; the green hills of Unterwalden rise above. This is the grandest piece of the shore of Lake Lucerne; the rocks near Tell's Chapel are neither so lofty nor so precipitous.

1. Forest-lands, sustaining the great mass of the magnificent vegetation of the tropics, for the most part characterized by moist and unhealthy heat, and watered by enormous rivers, or periodical rains. This country cannot, I believe, develop the mind or art of man. He may reach great subtlety of intellect, as the Indian, but not become learned, nor produce any noble art, only a savage or grotesque form of it. Even supposing the evil influences of climate could be vanquished, the scenery is on too large a scale. It would be difficult to conceive of groves less fit for academic purposes than those mentioned by Humboldt, into which no one can enter except under a stout wooden shield, to avoid the chance of being killed by the fall of a nut.

2. Sand-lands, including the desert and dry rock-plains of the earth, inhabited generally by a nomad population, capable of high mental cultivation and of solemn monumental or religious art, but not of art in which pleasurableness forms a large element, their life being essentially one of hardship.

3. Grape and wheat lands, namely, rocks and hills, such as are good for the vine, associated with arable ground, forming the noblest and best ground given to man. In these districts only art of the highest kind seems possible, the religious art of the sand-lands being here joined with that of pleasure or sense.

4. Meadow-lands, including the great pastoral and agricultural districts of the north, capable only of an inferior art: apt to lose its spirituality and become wholly material.

5. Moss-lands, including the rude forest-mountain and ground of the North, inhabited by a healthy race, capable of high mental cultivation and moral energy, but wholly incapable of art, except savage, like that of the forest-lands, or as in Scandinavia.

We might carry out these divisions into others, but these are, I think, essential, and easily remembered in a tabular form; saying "wood" instead of "forest," and "field" for "meadow," we can get such a form shortly worded:

Wood-lands . . .	Shrewd intellect . . .	No art
Sand-lands . . .	High intellect . . .	Religious art

Vine-lands . . .	Highest intellect . . .	Perfect art
Field-lands . . .	High intellect . . .	Material art
Moss-lands . . .	Shrewd intellect . . .	No art

In this table the moss-lands appear symmetrically opposed to the wood-lands, which in a sort they are; the too diminutive vegetation under bleakest heaven, opposed to the too colossal under sultriest heaven, while the perfect ministry of the elements, represented by bread and wine, produces the perfect soul of man.

But this is not altogether so. The moss-lands have one great advantage over the forest-lands, namely, sight of the sky.

And not only sight of it, but continual and beneficent help from it. What they have to separate them from barren rock, namely, their moss and streams, being dependent on its direct help, not on great rivers coming from distant mountain chains, nor on vast tracts of ocean-mist coming up at evening, but on the continual play and change of sun and cloud.

Note this word "change." The moss-lands have an infinite advantage, not only in sight, but in liberty; they are the freest ground in all the world. You can only traverse the great woods by crawling like a lizard, or climbing like a monkey—the great sands with slow steps and veiled head. But bare-headed, and open-eyed, and free-limbed, commanding all the horizon's space of changeful light, and all the horizon's compass of tossing ground, you traverse the moss-land. In discipline it is severe as the desert, but it is a discipline compelling to action; and the moss-lands seem, therefore, the rough schools of the world, in which its strongest human frames are knit and tried, and so sent down, like the northern winds, to brace and brighten the languor into which the repose of more favoured districts may degenerate.

It would be strange, indeed, if there were no beauty in the phenomena by which this great renovating and purifying work is done. And it is done almost entirely by the Great Angel of the Sea—rain;—the Angel observe, the messenger sent to a special place on a special errand. Not the diffused perpetual presence of the burden of mist, but the going and

returning of intermittent cloud. All turns upon that intermittence. Soft moss on stone and rock; cave-fern of tangled glen; wayside well—perennial, patient, silent, clear; stealing through its square font of rough-hewn stone; ever thus deep—no more—which the winter wreck sullies not, the summer thirst wastes not, incapable of stain as of decline—where the fallen leaf floats undecayed, and the insect darts undefiling. Cressed brook and ever-eddying river, lifted even in flood scarcely over its stepping-stones—but through all sweet summer keeping tremulous music with harp-strings of dark water among the silver fingering of the pebbles. Far away in the south the strong river Gods have all hasted, and gone down to the sea. Wasted and burning, white furnaces of blasting sand, their broad beds lie ghastly and bare; but here the soft wings of the Sea Angel droop still with dew, and the shadows of their plumes falter on the hills: strange laughings and glitterings of silver streamlets, born suddenly, and twined about the mossy heights in trickling tinsel, answering to them as they wave.[1]

Nor are those wings colourless. We habitually think of the rain-cloud only as dark and grey; not knowing that we owe to it perhaps the fairest, though not the most dazzling of the hues of heaven. Often in our English mornings, the rain-clouds in the dawn form soft level fields, which melt imperceptibly into the blue; or when of less extent, gather into apparent bars, crossing the sheets of broader cloud above; and all these bathed throughout in an unspeakable light of pure rose-colour, and purple, and amber, and blue; not shining, but misty-soft; the barred masses, when seen nearer, composed of clusters or tresses of cloud, like floss silk; looking as if each knot were a little swathe or sheaf of lighted rain. No clouds form such skies, none are so tender, various, inimitable. Turner himself never caught them. Correggio, putting out his whole strength, could have painted them, no other man.

For these are the robes of love of the Angel of the Sea. To these that name is chiefly given, the "spreadings of the

[1] Compare the beautiful stanza beginning the epilogue of *The Golden Legend.*

clouds," from their extent, their gentleness, their fulness of rain. Note how they are spoken of in *Job*, xxxvi., v. 29–31. "By them judgeth he the people; he giveth meat in abundance. With clouds he covereth the light.[1] He hath hidden the light in his hands, and commanded it that it should return. He speaks of it to his friend; that it is his possession, and that he may ascend thereto."

That, then, is the Sea Angel's message to God's friends; *that*, the meaning of those strange golden lights and purple flushes before the morning rain. The rain is sent to judge, and feed us; but the light is the possession of the friends of God, and they may ascend thereto—where the tabernacle veil will cross and part its rays no more.

But the Angel of the Sea has also another message—in the "great rain of his strength," rain of trial, sweeping away ill-set foundations. Then his robe is not spread softly over the whole heaven, as a veil, but sweeps back from his shoulders, ponderous, oblique, terrible—leaving his sword-arm free.

The approach of trial-storm, hurricane-storm, is indeed in its vastness as the clouds of the softer rain. But it is not slow nor horizontal, but swift and steep: swift with passion of ravenous winds; steep as slope of some dark, hollowed hill. The fronting clouds come leaning forward, one thrusting the other aside, or on; impatient, ponderous, impendent, like globes of rock tossed of Titans—Ossa on Olympus—but hurled forward all, in one wave of cloud-lava—cloud whose throat is as a sepulchre. Fierce behind them rages the oblique wrath of the rain, white as ashes, dense as showers of driven steel; the pillars of it full of ghastly life; Rain-Furies, shrieking as they fly—scourging, as with whips of scorpions—the earth ringing and trembling under them, heaven wailing wildly, the trees stooped blindly down, covering their faces, quivering in every leaf with horror, ruin of their branches flying by them like black stubble.

I wrote Furies. I ought to have written Gorgons. Per-

[1] I do not copy the interpolated words which follow, "and commandeth it *not to shine*." The closing verse of the chapter, as we have it, is unintelligible; not so in the Vulgate, the reading of which I give.

haps the reader does not know that the Gorgons are not dead, are ever undying. We shall have to take our chance of being turned into stones by looking them in the face, presently. Meantime, I gather what part of the great Greek story of the Sea Angels, has meaning for us here.

Nereus, the God of the Sea, who dwells in it always (Neptune being the God who rules it from Olympus), has children by the Earth; namely, Thaumas, the father of Iris; that is, the "wonderful" or miracle-working angel of the sea; Phorcys, the malignant angel of it (you will find him degraded through many forms, at last, in the story of Sinbad, into the old man of the sea); Ceto, the deep places of the sea, meaning its bays and rocks, therefore called by Hesiod "Fair-cheeked" Ceto; and Eurybia, the tidal force or sway of the sea.

Phorcys and Ceto, the malignant angel of the sea, and the spirit of its deep rocky places, have children, namely, first, Graiæ, the soft rain-clouds. The Greeks had a greater dislike of storm than we have, and therefore whatever violence is in the action of rain, they represented by harsher types than we should—types given in one group by Aristophanes (speaking in mockery of the poets): "This was the reason, then, that they made so much talk about the fierce rushing of the moist clouds, coiled in glittering; and the locks of the hundred-headed Typhon; and the blowing storms; and the bent-clawed birds drifted on the breeze, fresh, and aerial." Note the expression "bent-clawed birds." It illustrates two characters of these clouds; partly their coiling form; but more directly the way they tear down the earth from the hill-sides; especially those twisted storm-clouds which in violent action become the waterspout. These always strike at a narrow point, often opening the earth on a hill-side into a trench as a great pickaxe would (whence the Graiæ are said to have only one beak between them). Nevertheless, the rain-cloud was, on the whole, looked upon by the Greeks as beneficent, so that it is boasted of in the Œdipus Coloneus for its perpetual feeding of the springs of Cephisus,[1] and else-

[1] I assume the ἄϋπνοι κρῆναι νομάδες to mean clouds, not springs; but this does not matter, the whole passage being one of rejoicing in moisture and dew of heaven.

where often; and the opening song of the rain-clouds in Aristophanes is entirely beautiful:

"O eternal Clouds! let us raise into open sight our dewy existence, from the deep-sounding Sea, our Father, up to the crests of the wooded hills, whence we look down over the sacred land, nourishing its fruits, and over the rippling of the divine rivers, and over the low murmuring bays of the deep." I cannot satisfy myself about the meaning of the names of the Graiæ—Pephredo and Enuo—but the epithets which Hesiod gives them are interesting: "Pephredo, the well-robed; Enuo, the crocus-robed;" probably, it seems to me, from their beautiful colours in morning.

Next to the Graiæ, Phorcys and Ceto begat the Gorgons, which are the true storm-clouds. The Graiæ have only one beak or tooth, but all the Gorgons have tusks like boars; brazen hands (brass being the word used for the metal of which the Greeks made their spears), and golden wings.

Their names are "Steino" (straitened), of storms compressed into narrow compass; "Euryale" (having wide threshing-floor), of storms spread over great space; "Medusa" (the dominant), the most terrible. She is essentially the highest storm-cloud; therefore the hail-cloud or cloud of cold, her countenance turning all who beheld it to stone. ("He casteth forth his ice like morsels. Who can stand before his cold?") The serpents about her head are the fringes of the hail, the idea of coldness being connected by the Greeks with the bite of the serpent, as with the hemlock.

On Minerva's shield, her head signifies, I believe, the cloudy coldness of knowledge, and its venomous character ("Knowledge puffeth up." Compare Bacon in *Advancement of Learning*). But the idea of serpents rose essentially from the change of form in the cloud as it broke; the cumulus cloud not breaking into full storm till it is cloven by the cirrus; which is twice hinted at in the story of Perseus; only we must go back a little to gather it together.

Perseus was the son of Jupiter by Danaë, who being shut in a brazen tower, Jupiter came to her in a shower of

gold: the brazen tower being, I think, only another expression for the cumulus or Medusa cloud; and the golden rain for the rays of the sun striking it; but we have not only this rain of Danaë's to remember in connection with the Gorgon, but that also of the sieves of the Danaïdes, said to represent the provision of Argos with water by their father Danaüs, who dug wells about the Acropolis; nor only wells, but opened, I doubt not, channels of irrigation for the fields, because the Danaïdes are said to have brought the mysteries of Ceres from Egypt. And though I cannot trace the root of the names Danaüs and Danaë, there is assuredly some farther link of connection in the deaths of the lovers of the Danaïdes, whom they slew, as Perseus Medusa. And again note, that when the father of Danaë, Acrisius, is detained in Seriphos by storms, a disk thrown by Perseus is carried *by the wind against his head*, and kills him; and lastly, when Perseus cuts off the head of Medusa, from her blood springs Chrysaor, "wielder of the golden sword," the Angel of the Lightning, and Pegasus, the Angel of the "Wild Fountains," that is to say, the fastest flying or lower rain-cloud; winged, but racing as upon the earth.

I say "wild" fountains; because the kind of fountain from which Pegasus is named is especially the "fountain of the great deep" of *Genesis;* sudden and furious (cataracts of heaven, not windows, in the Septuagint); the mountain torrent caused by thunderous storm, or as our "fountain"—a geyser-like leaping forth of water. Therefore, it is the deep and full source of streams, and so used typically of the source of evils, or of passions; whereas the word "spring" with the Greeks is like our "well-head"—a gentle issuing forth of water continually. But, because both the lightning-fire and the gushing forth, as of a fountain, are the signs of the poet's true power, together with perpetuity, it is Pegasus who strikes the earth with his foot, on Helicon,[1]

[1] I believe, however, that when Pegasus strikes forth this fountain, he is to be regarded, not as springing from Medusa's blood, but as born of Medusa by Neptune; the true horse was given by Neptune striking the earth with his trident; the divine horse is born to Neptune and the storm-cloud.

and causes Hippocrene to spring forth—"the horse's well-head." It is perpetual; but has, nevertheless, the Pegasean storm-power.

Wherein we may find, I think, sufficient cause for putting honour upon the rain-cloud. Few of us, perhaps, have thought, in watching its career across our own mossy hills, or listening to the murmur of the springs amidst the mountain quietness, that the chief masters of the human imagination owed, and confessed that they owed, the force of their noblest thoughts, not to the flowers of the valley, nor the majesty of the hill, but to the flying cloud.

Yet they never saw it fly, as we may in our own England. So far, at least, as I know the clouds of the south, they are often more terrible than ours, but the English Pegasus is swifter. On the Yorkshire and Derbyshire hills, when the rain-cloud is low and much broken, and the steady west wind fills all space with its strength,[1] the sun-gleams fly like golden vultures: they are flashes rather than shinings; the dark spaces and the dazzling race and skim along the acclivities, and dart and dip from crag to dell, swallow-like; no Graiæ these, grey and withered: Grey Hounds rather, following the Cerinthian stag with the golden antlers.

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58. The Significance of Help.

COMPOSITION may be best defined as the help of everything in the picture by everything else.

I wish the reader to dwell a little on this word "Help." It is a grave one.

[1] I have been often at great heights on the Alps in rough weather, and have seen strong gusts of storm in the plains of the south. But, to get full expression of the very heart and meaning of wind, there is no place like a Yorkshire moor. I think Scottish breezes are thinner, very bleak and piercing, but not substantial. If you lean on them they will let you fall, but one may rest against a Yorkshire breeze as one would on a quickset hedge. I shall not soon forget—having had the good fortune to meet a vigorous one on an April morning, between Hawes and Settle, just on the flat under Wharnside—the vague sense of wonder with which I watched Ingleborough stand without rocking.

In substance which we call "inanimate," as of clouds, or stones, their atoms may cohere to each other, or consist with each other, but they do not help each other. The removal of one part does not injure the rest.

But in a plant, the taking away of any one part does injure the rest. Hurt or remove any portion of the sap, bark, or pith, the rest is injured. If any part enters into a state in which it no more assists the rest, and has thus become "helpless," we call it also "dead."

The power which causes the several portions of the plant to help each other, we call life. Much more is this so in an animal. We may take away the branch of a tree without much harm to it; but not the animal's limb. Thus, intensity of life is also intensity of helpfulness—completeness of depending of each part on all the rest. The ceasing of this help is what we call corruption; and in proportion to the perfectness of the help, is the dreadfulness of the loss. The more intense the life has been, the more terrible is its corruption.

The decomposition of a crystal is not necessarily impure at all. The fermentation of a wholesome liquid begins to admit the idea slightly; the decay of leaves yet more; of flowers, more; of animals, with greater painfulness and terribleness in exact proportion to their original vitality; and the foulest of all corruption is that of the body of man; and, in his body, that which is occasioned by disease, more than that of natural death.

I said just now, that though atoms of inanimate substance could not help each other, they could "consist" with each other. "Consistence" is their virtue. Thus the parts of a crystal are consistent, but of dust, inconsistent. Orderly adherence, the best help its atoms can give, constitutes the nobleness of such substance.

When matter is either consistent, or living, we call it pure, or clean; when inconsistent or corrupting (unhelpful), we call it impure, or unclean. The greatest uncleanliness being that which is essentially most opposite to life.

Life and consistency, then, both expressing one character (namely, helpfulness, of a higher or lower order), the Maker

of all creatures and things, "by whom all creatures live, and all things consist," is essentially and for ever the Helpful One, or in softer Saxon, the "Holy" One.

The word has no other ultimate meaning: Helpful, harmless, undefiled: "living" or "Lord of life."

The idea is clear and mighty in the cherubim's cry: "Helpful, helpful, helpful, Lord God of Hosts," *i.e.* of all the hosts, armies, and creatures of the earth.[1]

A pure or holy state of anything, therefore, is that in which all its parts are helpful or consistent. They may or may not be homogeneous. The highest or organic purities are composed of many elements in an entirely helpful state. The highest and first law of the universe — and the other name of life, is, therefore, "help." The other name of death is "separation." Government and co-operation are in all things and eternally the laws of life. Anarchy and competition, eternally, and in all things, the laws of death.

Perhaps the best, though the most familiar example we could take of the nature and power of consistence, will be that of the possible changes in the dust we tread on.

Exclusive of animal decay, we can hardly arrive at a more absolute type of impurity than the mud or slime of a damp, over-trodden path, in the outskirts of a manufacturing town. I do not say mud of the road, because that is mixed with animal refuse; but take merely an ounce or two of the blackest slime of a beaten footpath on a rainy day, near a large manufacturing town.

That slime we shall find in most cases composed of clay (or brickdust, which is burnt clay) mixed with soot, a little sand, and water. All these elements are at helpless war with each other, and destroy reciprocally each other's nature and power, competing and fighting for place at every tread

[1] "The cries of them which have reaped have entered into the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth (of all the creatures of the earth)." You will find a wonderful clearness come into many texts by reading, habitually, "helpful" and "helpfulness" for "holy" and "holiness," or else "living," as in *Rom.*, xi. 16. The sense "dedicated" (the Latin *sanctus*), being of course inapplicable to the Supreme Being, is an entirely secondary and accidental one.

of your foot—sand squeezing out clay, and clay squeezing out water, and soot meddling everywhere and defiling the whole. Let us suppose that this ounce of mud is left in perfect rest, and that its elements gather together, like to like, so that their atoms may get into the closest relations possible.

Let the clay begin. Ridding itself of all foreign substance, it gradually becomes a white earth, already very beautiful; and fit, with help of congealing fire, to be made into finest porcelain, and painted on, and be kept in kings' palaces. But such artificial consistence is not its best. Leave it still quiet to follow its own instinct of unity, and it becomes not only white, but clear; not only clear, but hard; nor only clear and hard, but so set that it can deal with light in a wonderful way, and gather out of it the loveliest blue rays only, refusing the rest. We call it then a sapphire.

Such being the consummation of the clay, we give similar permission of quiet to the sand. It also becomes, first, a white earth, then proceeds to grow clear and hard, and at last arranges itself in mysterious, infinitely fine, parallel lines, which have the power of reflecting not merely the blue rays, but the blue, green, purple, and red rays in the greatest beauty in which they can be seen through any fired material whatsoever. We call it then an opal.

In next order the soot sets to work; it cannot make itself white at first, but instead of being discouraged, tries harder and harder, and comes our clear at last, and the hardest thing in the world; and for the blackness that it had, obtains in exchange the power of reflecting all the rays of the sun at once in the vividest blaze that any solid thing can shoot. We call it then a diamond.

Last of all the water purifies or unites itself, contented enough if it only reach the form of a dewdrop; but if we insist on its proceeding to a more perfect consistence, it crystallizes into the shape of a star.

And for the ounce of slime which we had by political economy of competition, we have by political economy of co-operation, a sapphire, an opal, and a diamond, set in the midst of a star of snow.

59. The Greek Assertion of Victory.

THE ruling purpose of Greek poetry is the assertion of victory, by heroism, over fate, sin, and death. The terror of these great enemies is dwelt upon chiefly by the tragedians. The victory over them, by Homer.

The adversary chiefly contemplated by the tragedians is Fate, or predestinate misfortune. And that under three principal forms.

(A) Blindness, or ignorance; not in itself guilty, but inducing acts which otherwise would have been guilty; and leading, no less than guilt, to destruction.[1]

(B) Visitation upon one person of the sin of another.

(C) Repression by brutal, or tyrannous strength, of a benevolent will.

In all these cases sorrow is much more definitely connected with sin by the Greek tragedians than by Shakspeare. The "fate" of Shakspeare is, indeed, a form of blindness, but it issues in little more than haste or indiscretion. It is, in the literal sense, "fatal," but hardly criminal.

The "I am fortune's fool" of Romeo, expresses Shakspeare's primary idea of tragic circumstance. Often his victims are entirely innocent, swept away by mere current of strong encompassing calamity (Ophelia, Cordelia, Arthur, Queen Katharine). This is rarely so with the Greeks. The victim may indeed be innocent, as Antigone, but is in some way resolutely entangled with crime, and destroyed by it, as if it struck by pollution, no less than participation.

The victory over sin and death is therefore also with the

[1] The speech of Achilles to Priam expresses this idea of fatality and submission clearly, there being two vessels—one full of sorrow, the other of great and noble gifts (a sense of disgrace mixing with that of sorrow, and of honour with that of joy), from which Jupiter pours forth the destinies of men; the idea partly corresponding to the scriptural "In the hand of the Lord there is a cup, and the wine is red; it is full mixed, and He poureth out of the same." But the title of the gods, nevertheless, both with Homer and Hesiod, is given not from the cup of sorrow, but of good: "givers of good" (δωτῆρες ἐάων).—Hes., *Theog.*, 664; *Odyss.*, viii. 325.

Greek tragedians more complete than with Shakspeare. As the enemy has more direct moral personality, as it is sinfulness more than mischance, it is met by a higher moral resolve, a greater preparation of heart, a more solemn patience and purposed self-sacrifice. At the close of a Shakspeare tragedy nothing remains but dead march and clothes of burial. At the close of a Greek tragedy there are far-off sounds of a divine triumph, and a glory as of resurrection.[1]

The Homeric temper is wholly different. Far more tender, more practical, more cheerful; bent chiefly on present things and giving victory now, and here, rather than in hope, and hereafter. The enemies of mankind, in Homer's conception, are more distinctly conquerable; they are ungoverned passions, especially anger, and unreasonable impulse generally (ἀτη). Hence the anger of Achilles, misdirected by pride, but rightly directed by friendship, is the subject of the *Iliad*. The anger of Ulysses ('Οδυσσεὺς "the angry"), misdirected at first into idle and irregular hostilities, directed at last to execution of sternest justice, is the subject of the *Odyssey*.

Though this is the central idea of the two poems, it is connected with general display of the evil of all unbridled passions, pride, sensuality, indolence, or curiosity. The pride of Atrides, the passion of Paris, the sluggishness of Elpenor, the curiosity of Ulysses himself about the Cyclops, the impatience of his sailors in untying the winds, and all other faults or follies, down to that—(evidently no small one in Homer's mind)—of domestic disorderliness, are throughout shown in contrast with conditions of patient affection and household peace.

Also, the wild powers and mysteries of Nature are in the Homeric mind among the enemies of man; so that all the labours of Ulysses are an expression of the contest of manhood, not only with its own passions or with the folly of others, but with the merciless and mysterious powers of the natural world.

This is perhaps the chief signification of the seven years' stay with Calypso, "the concealer." Not, as vulgarly thought,

[1] The *Alcestis* is perhaps the central example of the *idea* of all Greek drama.

the concealer of Ulysses, but the great concealer—the hidden power of natural things. She is the daughter of Atlas and the Sea (Atlas, the sustainer of heaven, and the Sea, the disturber of the Earth). She dwells in the island of Ogygia ("the ancient or venerable"). (Whenever Athens, or any other Greek city, is spoken of with any peculiar reverence, it is called "Ogygian.") Escaping from this goddess of secrets, and from other spirits, some of destructive natural force (Scylla), others signifying the enchantment of mere natural beauty (Circe, daughter of the Sun and Sea), he arrives at last at the Phæacian land, whose king is "strength with intellect," and whose queen, "virtue." These restore him to his country.

Now observe that in their dealing with all these subjects the Greeks never shrink from horror; down to its uttermost depth, to its most appalling physical detail, they strive to sound the secrets of sorrow. For them there is no passing by on the other side, no turning away the eyes to vanity from pain. Literally, they have not "lifted up their souls unto vanity." Whether there be consolation for them or not, neither apathy nor blindness shall be their saviours; if, for them, thus knowing the facts of the grief of earth, any hope, relief, or triumph may hereafter seem possible—well; but if not, still hopeless, reliefless, eternal, the sorrow shall be met face to face. This Hector, so righteous, so merciful, so brave, has, nevertheless, to look upon his dearest brother in miserablest death. His own soul passes away in hopeless sobs through the throat-wound of the Grecian spear. That is one aspect of things in this world, a fair world truly, but having, among its other aspects, this one, highly ambiguous.

Meeting it boldly as they may, gazing right into the skeleton face of it, the ambiguity remains; nay, in some sort gains upon them. We trusted in the gods; we thought that wisdom and courage would save us. Our wisdom and courage themselves deceive us to our death. Athena had the aspect of Deiphobus—terror of the enemy. She has not terrified him, but left us, in our mortal need.

And beyond that mortality, what hope have we? Nothing is clear to us on that horizon, nor comforting. Funeral

honours; perhaps also rest; perhaps a shadowy life—artless, joyless, loveless. No devices in that darkness of the grave, nor daring, nor delight. Neither marrying nor giving in marriage, nor casting of spears, nor rolling of chariots, nor voice of fame. Lapped in pale Elysian mist, chilling the forgetful heart and feeble frame, shall we waste on for ever? Can the dust of earth claim more of immortality than this? Or shall we have even so much as rest? May we, indeed, lie down again in the dust, or have our sins not hidden from us, even the things that belong to that peace? May not chance and the whirl of passion govern us there; when there shall be no thought, nor work, nor wisdom, nor breathing of the soul?

Be it so. With no better reward, no brighter hope, we will be men while we may: men, just, and strong, and fearless, and up to our power, perfect. Athena herself, our wisdom and our strength, may betray us; Phœbus, our sun, smite us with plague, or hide his face from us helpless; Jove and all the powers of fate oppress us, or give us up to destruction. While we live, we will hold fast our integrity; no weak tears shall blind us, no untimely tremors abate our strength of arm nor swiftness of limb. The gods have given us at least this glorious body and this righteous conscience; these will we keep bright and pure to the end. So may we fall to misery, but not to baseness; so may we sink to sleep, but not to shame.

And herein was conquest. So defied, the betraying and accusing shadows shrank back; the mysterious horror subdued itself to majestic sorrow. Death was swallowed up in victory. Their blood, which seemed to be poured out upon the ground, rose into hyacinthine flowers. All the beauty of earth opened to them; they had ploughed into its darkness, and they reaped its gold; the gods, in whom they had trusted through all semblance of oppression, came down to love them and be their helpmates. All nature round them became divine—one harmony of power and peace. The sun hurt them not by day, nor the moon by night; the earth opened no more her jaws into the pit; the sea whitened no more against them the teeth of his devouring waves. Sun, and moon, and earth,

and sea—all melted into grace and love; the fatal arrows rang not now at the shoulders of Apollo the healer; lord of life, and of the three great spirits of life—Care, Memory, and Melody. Great Artemis guarded their flocks by night; Selene kissed in love the eyes of those who slept. And from all came the help of heaven to body and soul; a strange spirit lifting the lovely limbs; strange light glowing on the golden hair; and strangest comfort filling the trustful heart, so that they could put off their armour, and lie down to sleep—their work well done, whether at the gates of their temples or of their mountains; accepting the death they once thought terrible, as the gift of Him who knew and granted what was best.

60. The Venetian Garden.

THE Venetians had a garden, deep-furrowed, with blossom in white wreaths—fruitless. Perpetual May therein, and singing of wild, nestless birds.....The destiny of Pisa was changed, in all probability, by the ten miles of marshland and poisonous air between it and the beach. The Genoese energy was feverish; too much heat reflected from their torrid Apennine. But the Venetian had his free horizon, his salt breeze, and sandy Lido-shore; sloped far and flat—ridged sometimes under the Tramontane winds with half a mile's breadth of rollers—sea and sand shrivelled up together in one yellow careering field of fall and roar.

They were, also, we said, always quarrelling with the Pope. Their religious liberty came, like their bodily health, from that wave-training; for it is one notable effect of a life passed on shipboard to destroy weak beliefs in appointed forms of religion. A sailor may be grossly superstitious, but his superstitions will be connected with amulets and omens, not cast in systems. He must accustom himself, if he prays at all, to pray anywhere and anyhow. Candlesticks and incense not being portable into the maintop, he perceives those decorations to be, on the whole, inessential to a maintop mass. Sails must be set and cables bent, be it never so strict

a saint's day, and it is found that no harm comes of it. Absolution on a lee-shore must be had of the breakers, it appears, if at all, and they give it plenary and brief, without listening to confession.

Whereupon our religious opinions become vague, but our religious confidences strong; and the end of it all is that we perceive the Pope to be on the other side of the Apennines, and able, indeed, to sell indulgences, but not winds, for any money. Whereas, God and the sea are with us, and we must even trust them both, and take what they shall send.

Then, farther. This ocean-work is wholly adverse to any morbid conditions of sentiment. Reverie, above all things, is forbidden by Scylla and Charybdis. By the dogs and the depths, no dreaming! The first thing required of us is presence of mind. Neither love, nor poetry, nor piety, must ever so take up our thoughts as to make us slow or unready. In sweet Val d'Arno it is permissible enough to dream among the orange-blossoms, and forget the day in twilight of ilex. But along the avenues of the Adrian waves there can be no careless walking. Vigilance, night and day, required of us, besides learning of many practical lessons in severe and humble dexterities. Is is enough for the Florentine to know how to use his sword and to ride. We Venetians, also, must be able to use our swords, and on ground which is none of the steadiest; but, besides, we must be able to do nearly every thing that hands can turn to—rudders, and yards, and cables, all needing workmanly handling and workmanly knowledge, from captain as well as from men. To drive a nail, lash a spar, reef a sail—rude work this for noble hands; but to be done sometimes, and done well, on pain of death. All which not only takes mean pride out of us, and puts nobler pride of power in its stead; but it tends partly to soothe, partly to chasten, partly to employ and direct, the hot Italian temper, and make us every way greater, calmer, and happier.

Moreover, it tends to induce in us great respect for the whole human body; for its limbs, as much as for its tongue or its wit. Policy and eloquence are well; and, indeed, we Venetians can be politic enough, and can speak melodiously when we choose; but to put the helm up at the right

moment is the beginning of all cunning—and for that we need arm and eye, not tongue. And with this respect for the body as such, comes also the sailor's preference of massive beauty in bodily form. The landsmen, among their roses and orange-blossoms, and chequered shadows of twisted vine, may well please themselves with pale faces, and finely drawn eyebrows, and fantastic braiding of hair. But from the sweeping glory of the sea we learn to love another kind of beauty; broad-breasted; level-browed, like the horizon; thighed and shouldered like the billows; footed like their stealing foam; bathed in cloud of golden hair, like their sunsets.

Such were the physical influences constantly in operation on the Venetians; their painters, however, were partly prepared for their work by others in their infancy. Associations connected with early life among mountains softened and deepened the teaching of the sea; and the wildness of form of the Tyrolese Alps gave greater strength and grotesqueness to their imaginations than the Greek painters could have found among the cliffs of the Ægean. Thus far, however, the influences on both are nearly similar. The Greek sea was indeed less bleak, and the Greek hills less grand; but the difference was in degree rather than in the nature of their power. The moral influences at work on the two races were far more sharply opposed.

Evil, as we saw, had been fronted by the Greek, and thrust out of his path. Once conquered, if he thought of it more, it was involuntarily, as we remember a painful dream, yet with a secret dread that the dream might return and continue for ever. But the teaching of the church in the middle ages had made the contemplation of evil one of the duties of men. As sin, it was to be duly thought upon, that it might be confessed. As suffering, endured joyfully, in hope of future reward. Hence conditions of bodily distemper which an Athenian would have looked upon with the severest contempt and aversion, were in the Christian church regarded always with pity, and often with respect; while the partial practice of celibacy by the clergy, and by those over whom they had influence—together with the whole system of conventual penance and pathetic ritual (with the vicious reactionary

tendencies necessarily following), introduced calamitous conditions both of body and soul, which added largely to the pagan's simple list of elements of evil, and introduced the most complicated states of mental suffering and decrepitude.

Therefore the Christian painters differed from the Greek in two main points. They had been taught a faith which put an end to restless questioning and discouragement. All was at last to be well—and their best genius might be peacefully given to imagining the glories of heaven and the happiness of its redeemed. But on the other hand, though suffering was to cease in heaven, it was to be not only endured, but honoured upon earth. And from the Crucifixion, down to a beggar's lameness, all the tortures and maladies of men were to be made, at least in part, the subjects of art. The Venetian was, therefore, in his inner mind, less serious than the Greek: in his superficial temper, sadder. In his heart there was none of the deep horror which vexed the soul of Æschylus or Homer. His Pallas-shield was the shield of Faith, not the shield of the Gorgon. All was at last to issue happily; in sweetest harpings and seven-fold circles of light. But for the present he had to dwell with the maimed and the blind, and to revere Lazarus more than Achilles.

This reference to a future world has a morbid influence on all their conclusions. For the earth and all its natural elements are despised. They are to pass away like a scroll. Man, the immortal, is alone revered; his work and presence are all that can be noble or desirable. Men, and fair architecture, temples and courts such as may be in a celestial city, or the clouds and angels of Paradise; these are what we must paint when we want beautiful things. But the sea, the mountains, the forests, are all adverse to us—a desolation. The ground that was cursed for our sake; the sea that executed judgment on all our race, and rages against us still, though bridled; storm-demons churning it into foam in nightly glare on Lido, and hissing from it against our palaces. Nature is but a terror, or a temptation. She is for hermits, martyrs, murderers—for St. Jerome, and St. Mary of Egypt, and the Magdalen in the desert, and monk Peter, falling before the sword.

61. Vulgarity.

Two great errors, colouring, or rather discolouring, severally, the minds of the higher and lower classes, have sown wide dissension, and wider misfortune, through the society of modern days. These errors are in our modes of interpreting the word "gentleman."

Its primal, literal, and perpetual meaning is "a man of pure race;" well bred, in the sense that a horse or dog is well bred.

The so-called higher classes, being generally of purer race than the lower, have retained the true idea and the convictions associated with it; but are afraid to speak it out; and equivocate about it in public, this equivocation mainly proceeding from their desire to connect another meaning with it, and a false one—that of "a man living in idleness on other people's labour"—with which idea the term has nothing whatever to do.

The lower classes, denying vigorously and with reason, the notion that a gentleman means an idler, and rightly feeling that the more any one works, the more of a gentleman he becomes, and is likely to become—have nevertheless got little of the good they otherwise might, from the truth, because, with it, they wanted to hold a falsehood, namely, that race was of no consequence. It being precisely of as much consequence in man as it is in any other animal.

The nation cannot truly prosper till both these errors are finally got quit of. Gentlemen have to learn that it is no part of their duty or privilege to live on other people's toil. They have to learn that there is no degradation in the hardest manual, or the humblest servile, labour, when it is honest. But that there *is* degradation, and that deep, in extravagance, in bribery, in indolence, in pride, in taking places they are not fit for, or in coining places for which there is no need. It does not disgrace a gentleman to become an errand boy, or a day labourer; but it disgraces him much to become a knave, or a thief. And knavery is not the less knavery because it involves large interests, nor theft the less theft

because it is countenanced by usage, or accompanied by failure in undertaken duty. It is an incomparably less guilty form of robbery to cut a purse out of a man's pocket, than to take it out of his hand on the understanding that you are to steer his ship up channel, when you do not know the soundings.

On the other hand, the lower orders, and all orders, have to learn that every vicious habit and chronic disease communicates itself by descent; and that by purity of birth the entire system of the human body and soul may be gradually elevated, or, by recklessness of birth, degraded; until there shall be as much difference between the well-bred and ill-bred human creature (whatever pains be taken with their education) as between a wolf-hound and the vilest mongrel cur. And the knowledge of this great fact ought to regulate the education of our youth, and the entire conduct of the nation.[1]

Gentlemanliness, however, in ordinary parlance, must be taken to signify those qualities which are usually the evidence of high breeding, and which, so far as they can be acquired, it should be every man's effort to acquire; or, if he has them by nature, to preserve and exalt. Vulgarity, on the other hand, will signify qualities usually characteristic of ill-breeding,

[1] We ought always in pure English to use the term "good breeding" literally; and to say "good nurture" for what we usually mean by good breeding. Given the race and make of the animal, you may turn it to good or bad account; you may spoil your good dog or colt, and make him as vicious as you choose, or break his back at once by ill-usage; and you may, on the other hand, make something serviceable and respectable out of your poor cur or colt if you educate them carefully; but ill-bred they will both of them be to their lives' end; and the best you will ever be able to say of them is, that they are useful, and decently-behaved, ill-bred creatures. An error, which is associated with the truth, and which makes it always look weak and disputable, is the confusion of race with name; and the supposition that the blood of a family must still be good, if its genealogy be unbroken and its name not lost, though sire and son have been indulging age after age in habits involving perpetual degeneracy of race. Of course it is equally an error to suppose that, because a man's name is common, his blood must be base; since his family may have been ennobling it by pureness of moral habit for many generations, and yet may not have got any title, or other sign of nobleness, attached to their names. Nevertheless, the probability is always in favour of the race which has had acknowledged supremacy, and in which every motive leads to the endeavour to preserve their true nobility.

which, according to his power, it becomes every person's duty to subdue. We have briefly to note what these are.

A gentleman's first characteristic is that fineness of structure in the body, which renders it capable of the most delicate sensation; and of structure in the mind which renders it capable of the most delicate sympathies—one may say, simply, "fineness of nature." This is, of course, compatible with heroic bodily strength and mental firmness; in fact, heroic strength is not conceivable without such delicacy. Elephantine strength may drive its way through a forest and feel no touch of the boughs; but the white skin of Homer's Atrides would have felt a bent rose-leaf, yet subdue its feeling in glow of battle, and behave itself like iron. I do not mean to call an elephant a vulgar animal; but if you think about him carefully, you will find that his non-vulgarity consists in such gentleness as is possible to elephantine nature; not in his insensitive hide, nor in his clumsy foot; but in the way he will lift his foot if a child lies in his way; and in his sensitive trunk, and still more sensitive mind, and capability of pique on points of honour.

And, though rightness of moral conduct is ultimately the great purifier of race, the sign of nobleness is not in this rightness of moral conduct, but in sensitiveness. When the make of the creature is fine, its temptations are strong, as well as its perceptions; it is liable to all kinds of impressions from without in their most violent form; liable therefore to be abused and hurt by all kinds of rough things which would do a coarser creature little harm, and thus to fall into frightful wrong if its fate will have it so. Thus David, coming of gentlest as well as royalest race, of Ruth as well as of Judah, is sensitiveness through all flesh and spirit; not that his compassion will restrain him from murder when his terror urges him to it; nay, he is driven to the murder all the more by his sensitiveness to the shame which otherwise threatens him. But when his own story is told him under a disguise, though only a lamb is now concerned, his passion about it leaves him no time for thought. "The man shall die"—note the reason—"because he had no pity." He is so eager and indignant that it never occurs to him as strange that Nathan

hides the name. This is true gentleman. A vulgar man would assuredly have been cautious, and asked "who it was."

Hence it will follow that one of the probable signs of high breeding in men generally, will be their kindness and mercifulness; these always indicating more or less fineness of make in the mind; and miserliness and cruelty the contrary; hence that of Isaiah: "The vile person shall no more be called liberal, nor the churl said to be bountiful." But a thousand things may prevent this kindness from displaying or continuing itself; the mind of the man may be warped so as to bear mainly on his own interests, and then all his sensibilities will take the form of pride, or fastidiousness, or revengefulness; and other wicked, but not ungentlemanly tempers; or, further, they may run into utter sensuality and covetousness, if he is bent on pleasure, accompanied with quite infinite cruelty when the pride is wounded or the passions thwarted—until your gentleman becomes Ezzelin and your lady, the deadly Lucrece; yet still gentleman and lady, quite incapable of making anything else of themselves, being so born.

A truer sign of breeding than mere kindness is therefore sympathy; a vulgar man may often be kind in a hard way, on principle, and because he thinks he ought to be; whereas, a highly-bred man, even when cruel, will be cruel in a softer way, understanding and feeling what he inflicts, and pitying his victim. Only we must carefully remember that the quantity of sympathy a gentleman feels can never be judged of by its outward expression, for another of his chief characteristics is apparent reserve. I say "apparent" reserve; for the sympathy is real, but the reserve not: a perfect gentleman is never reserved, but sweetly and entirely open, so far as it is good for others, or possible, that he should be. In a great many respects it is impossible that he should be open except to men of his own kind. To them, he can open himself, by a word, or syllable, or a glance; but to men not of his kind he cannot open himself, though he tried it through an eternity of clear grammatical speech. By the very acuteness of his sympathy he knows how much of himself he can give to any

body; and he gives that much frankly—would always be glad to give more if he could, but is obliged, nevertheless, in his general intercourse with the world, to be a somewhat silent person; silence is to most people, he finds, less reserve than speech. Whatever he said, a vulgar man would misinterpret: no words that he could use would bear the same sense to the vulgar man that they do to him; if he used any, the vulgar man would go away saying "He had said so and so, and meant so and so" (something assuredly he never meant); but he keeps silence, and the vulgar man goes away saying "He didn't know what to make of him." Which is precisely the fact, and the only fact which he is anywise able to announce to the vulgar man concerning himself.

There is yet another quite as efficient cause of the apparent reserve of a gentleman. His sensibility being constant and intelligent, it will be seldom that a feeling touches him, however acutely, but it has touched him in the same way often before, and in some sort is touching him always. It is not that he feels little, but that he feels habitually; a vulgar man having some heart at the bottom of him, if you can by talk or by sight fairly force the pathos of anything down to his heart, will be excited about it and demonstrative; the sensation of pity being strange to him, and wonderful. But your gentleman has walked in pity all day long; the tears have never been out of his eyes; you thought the eyes were bright only; but they were wet. You tell him a sorrowful story, and his countenance does not change; the eyes can but be wet still; he does not speak neither, there being, in fact, nothing to be said, only something to be done; some vulgar person, beside you both, goes away saying "How hard he is!" Next day he hears that the hard person has put good end to the sorrow he said nothing about; and then he changes his wonder, and exclaims "How reserved he is!"

Self-command is often thought a characteristic of high breeding: and to a certain extent it is so, at least it is one of the means of forming and strengthening character; but it is rather a way of imitating a gentleman than a characteristic of him; a true gentleman has no need of self-command; he

simply feels rightly on all occasions; and desiring to express only so much of his feeling as it is right to express, does not need to command himself. Hence perfect ease is indeed characteristic of him; but perfect ease is inconsistent with self-restraint. Nevertheless gentlemen, so far as they fail of their own ideal, need to command themselves, and do so; while, on the contrary, to feel unwisely, and to be unable to restrain the expression of the unwise feeling, is vulgarity; and yet even then, the vulgarity, at its root, is not in the mistimed expression, but in the unseemly feeling; and when we find fault with a vulgar person for "exposing himself," it is not his openness, but clumsiness; and yet more the want of sensibility to his own failure, which we blame; so that still the vulgarity resolves itself into want of sensibility. Also, it is to be noted that great powers of self-restraint may be attained by very vulgar persons, when it suits their purposes.

Closely, but strangely, connected with this openness is that form of truthfulness which is opposed to cunning, yet not opposed to falsity absolute. And herein is a distinction of great importance.

Cunning signifies especially a habit or gift of over-reaching, accompanied with enjoyment and a sense of superiority. It is associated with small and dull conceit, and with an absolute want of sympathy or affection. Its essential connection with vulgarity may be at once exemplified by the expression of the butcher's dog in Landseer's "Low Life." Cruikshank's "Noah Claypole," in the illustrations to *Oliver Twist*, in the interview with the Jew, is, however, still more characteristic. It is the intensest rendering of vulgarity absolute and utter with which I am acquainted.[1]

The truthfulness which is opposed to cunning ought, perhaps, rather to be called the desire of truthfulness; it consists more in unwillingness to deceive than in not deceiving—an unwillingness implying sympathy with and respect

[1] Among the reckless losses of the right service of intellectual power with which this century must be charged, very few are, to my mind, more to be regretted than that which is involved in its having turned to no higher purpose than the illustration of the career of Jack Sheppard, and of the Irish Rebellion, the great, grave (I use the words deliberately and with large meaning), and singular genius of Cruikshank.

for the person deceived; and a fond observance of truth up to the possible point, as in a good soldier's mode of retaining his honour through a *ruse-de-guerre*. A cunning person seeks for opportunities to deceive; a gentleman shuns them. A cunning person triumphs in deceiving; a gentleman is humiliated by his success, or at least by so much of the success as is dependent merely on the falsehood, and not on his intellectual superiority.

The absolute disdain of all lying belongs rather to Christian chivalry than to mere high breeding; as connected merely with this latter, and with general refinement and courage, the exact relations of truthfulness may be best studied in the well-trained Greek mind. The Greeks believed that mercy and truth were co-relative virtues—cruelty and falsehood, co-relative vices. But they did not call necessary severity, cruelty; nor necessary deception, falsehood. It was needful sometimes to slay men, and sometimes to deceive them. When this had to be done, it should be done well and thoroughly; so that to direct a spear well to its mark, or a lie well to its end, was equally the accomplishment of a perfect gentleman. Hence, in the pretty diamond-cut-diamond scene between Pallas and Ulysses, when she receives him on the coast of Ithaca, the goddess laughs delightedly at her hero's good lying, and gives him her hand upon it—showing herself then in her woman's form, as just a little more than his match. "Subtle would he be, and stealthy, who should go beyond thee in deceit, even were he a god, thou many-witted! What! here in thine own land, too, wilt thou not cease from cheating? Knowest thou not me, Pallas Athena, maid of Jove, who am with thee in all thy labours, and gave thee favour with the Phæacians, and keep thee, and have come now to weave cunning with thee?" But how completely this kind of cunning was looked upon as a part of a man's power, and not as a diminution of faithfulness, is perhaps best shown by the single line of praise in which the high qualities of his servant are summed up by Chremulus in the *Plutus*: "Of all my house servants, I hold you to be the faithfullest, and the greatest cheat (or thief)."

Thus, the primal difference between honourable and base

lying in the Greek mind lay in honourable purpose. A man who used his strength wantonly to hurt others was a monster; so, also, a man who used his cunning wantonly to hurt others. Strength and cunning were to be used only in self-defence or to save the weak, and then were alike admirable. This was their first idea. Then the second, and perhaps the more essential, difference between noble and ignoble lying in the Greek mind, was that the honourable lie—or, if we may use the strange, yet just, expression, the true lie—knew and confessed itself for such—was ready to take the full responsibility of what it did. As the sword answered for its blow, so the lie for its snare. But what the Greeks hated with all their heart was the false lie;—the lie that did not know itself, feared to confess itself, which slunk to its aim under a cloak of truth, and sought to do liars' work, and yet not take liars' pay, excusing itself to the conscience by quibble and quirk. Hence the great expression of Jesuit principle by Euripides "The tongue has sworn, but not the heart" was a subject of execration throughout Greece, and the satirists exhausted their arrows on it—no audience was ever tired of hearing "that Euripidean thing" (τὸ Εὐριπιδειον ἐκεῖνο) brought to shame.

And this is especially to be insisted on in the early education of young people. It should be pointed out to them with continual earnestness that the essence of lying is in deception, not in words; a lie may be told by silence, by equivocation, by the accent on a syllable, by a glance of the eye attaching a peculiar significance to a sentence; and all these kinds of lies are worse and baser by many degrees than a lie plainly worded; so that no form of blinded conscience is so far sunk as that which comforts itself for having deceived, because the deception was by gesture or silence, instead of utterance; and, finally, according to Tennyson's deep and trenchant line: "A lie which is half a truth is ever the worst of lies."

Although, however, ungenerous cunning is usually so distinct an outward manifestation of vulgarity, that I name it separately from insensibility, it is in truth only an effect of insensibility, producing want of affection to others, and blindness to the beauty of truth. The degree in which political

subtlety in men such as Richelieu, Machiavel, or Metternich, will efface the gentleman, depends on the selfishness of political purpose to which the cunning is directed, and on the base delight taken in its use. The command "Be ye wise as serpents, harmless as doves" is the ultimate expression of this principle, misunderstood usually because the word "wise" is referred to the intellectual power instead of the subtlety of the serpent. The serpent has very little intellectual power, but according to that which it has, it is yet, as of old, the subtlest of the beasts of the field.

Another great sign of vulgarity is also, when traced to its root, another phase of insensibility, namely, the undue regard to appearances and manners, as in the households of vulgar persons, of all stations, and the assumption of behaviour, language, or dress unsuited to them, by persons in inferior stations of life. I say "undue" regard to appearances, because in the undueness consists, of course, the vulgarity. It is due and wise in some sort to care for appearances, in another sort undue and unwise. Wherein lies the difference?

At first one is apt to answer quickly: the vulgarity is simply in pretending to be what you are not. But that answer will not stand. A queen may dress like a waiting maid—perhaps succeed, if she chooses, in passing for one; but she will not, therefore, be vulgar; nay, a waiting maid may dress like a queen, and pretend to be one, and yet need not be vulgar, unless there is inherent vulgarity in her. In Scribe's very absurd but very amusing *Reine d'un Jour* a milliner's girl sustains the part of a queen for a day. She several times amazes and disgusts her courtiers by her straightforwardness; and once or twice very nearly betrays herself to her maids of honour by an unqueenly knowledge of sewing; but she is not in the least vulgar, for she is sensitive, simple, and generous, and a queen could be no more.

Is the vulgarity, then, only in trying to play a part you cannot play, so as to be continually detected? No; a bad amateur actor may be continually detected in his part, but yet continually detected to be a gentleman: a vulgar regard to appearances has nothing in it necessarily of hypocrisy.

You shall know a man not to be a gentleman by the perfect and neat pronunciation of his words: but he does not pretend to pronounce accurately; he *does* pronounce accurately, the vulgarity is in the real (not assumed) scrupulousness.

It will be found on farther thought, that a vulgar regard for appearances is, primarily, a selfish one, resulting, not out of a wish to give pleasure (as a wife's wish to make herself beautiful for her husband), but out of an endeavour to mortify others, or attract for pride's sake—the common "keeping up appearances" of society being a mere selfish struggle of the vain with the vain. But the deepest stain of the vulgarity depends on this being done, not selfishly only, but stupidly, without understanding the impression which is really produced, nor the relations of importance between oneself and others, so as to suppose that their attention is fixed upon us, when we are in reality ciphers in their eyes—all which comes of insensibility. Hence pride simple is not vulgar (the looking down on others because of their true inferiority to us), nor vanity simple (the desire of praise), but conceit simple (the attribution to ourselves of qualities we have not) is always so. In cases of overstudied pronunciation, &c., there is insensibility, first, in the person's thinking more of himself than of what he is saying; and, secondly, in his not having musical fineness of ear enough to feel that his talking is uneasy and strained.

Finally, vulgarity is indicated by coarseness of language or manners, only so far as this coarseness has been contracted under circumstances not necessarily producing it. The illiterateness of a Spanish or Calabrian peasant is not vulgar, because they had never an opportunity of acquiring letters; but the illiterateness of an English schoolboy is. So again, provincial dialect is not vulgar; but cockney dialect, the corruption, by blunted sense, of a finer language continually heard, is so in a deep degree; and again, of this corrupted dialect, that is the worst which consists, not in the direct or expressive alteration of the form of a word, but in an unmusical destruction of it by dead utterance and bad or swollen formation of lip. There is no vulgarity in:

Blythe, blythe, blythe was she,
Blythe was she, but and ben,
And weel she liked a Hawick gill,
And leugh to see a tappit hen;

but much in Mrs. Gamp's inarticulate "bottle on the chumley-piece, and let me put my lips tc it when I am so dispoged."

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62. The Two Boyhoods.

BORN half-way between the mountains and the sea—that young George of Castelfranco—of the Brave Castle: Stout George they called him, George of Georges, so goodly a boy he was—Giorgione.

Have you ever thought what a world his eyes opened on—fair, searching eyes of youth? What a world of mighty life, from those mountain roots to the shore—of loveliest life, when he went down, yet so young, to the marble city—and became himself as a fiery heart to it?

A city of marble, did I say? Nay, rather a golden city, paved with emerald. For truly, every pinnacle and turret glanced or glowed, overlaid with gold, or bossed with jasper. Beneath, the unsullied sea drew in deep breathing, to and fro, its eddies of green wave. Deep-hearted, majestic, terrible as the sea,—the men of Venice moved in sway of power and war; pure as her pillars of alabaster, stood her mothers and maidens; from foot to brow, all noble, walked her knights; the low bronzed gleaming of sea-rusted armour shot angrily under their blood-red mantle-folds. Fearless, faithful, patient, impenetrable, implacable—every word a fate—sate her senate. In hope and honour, lulled by flowing of wave around their isles of sacred sand, each with his name written and the cross graved at his side, lay her dead. A wonderful piece of world. Rather, itself a world. It lay along the face of the waters, no larger, as its captains saw it from their masts at evening, than a bar of sunset that could not pass away; but for its power, it must have seemed to them as if they were sailing in the expanse of heaven, and this a great planet,

whose orient edge widened through ether. A world from which all ignoble care and petty thoughts were banished, with all the common and poor elements of life. No foulness, nor tumult, in those tremulous streets, that filled, or fell, beneath the moon; but rippled music of majestic change, or thrilling silence. No weak walls could rise above them; no low-roofed cottage, nor straw-built shed. Only the strength as of rock, and the finished setting of stones most precious. And around them, far as the eye could reach, still the soft moving of stainless waters, proudly pure; as not the flower, so neither the thorn nor the thistle, could grow in the glancing fields. Ethereal strength of Alps, dream-like, vanishing in high procession beyond the Torcellan shore; blue islands of Paduan hills, poised in the golden west. Above, free winds and fiery clouds ranging at their will—brightness out of the north, and balm from the south, and the stars of the evening and morning clear in the limitless light of arched heaven and circling sea.

Such was Giorgione's school—such Titian's home.

Near the south-west corner of Covent Garden, a square brick pit or well is formed by a close-set block of houses, to the back windows of which it admits a few rays of light. Access to the bottom of it is obtained out of Maiden Lane, through a low archway and an iron gate; and if you stand long enough under the archway to accustom your eyes to the darkness, you may see on the left hand a narrow door, which formerly gave quiet access to a respectable barber's shop, of which the front window, looking into Maiden Lane, is still extant, filled, in this year (1860), with a row of bottles, connected, in some defunct manner, with a brewer's business. A more fashionable neighbourhood, it is said, eighty years ago than now—never certainly a cheerful one—wherein a boy being born on St. George's day, 1775, began soon after to take interest in the world of Covent Garden, and put to service such spectacles of life as it afforded.

No knights to be seen there, nor, I imagine, many beautiful ladies; their costume at least disadvantageous, depending much on incumbency of hat and feather, and short waists; the majesty of men founded similarly on shoebuckles and

wigs;—impressive enough when Reynolds will do his best for it; but not suggestive of much ideal delight to a boy.

"Bello ovile dov' io dormii agnello:" of things beautiful, besides men and women, dusty sunbeams up or down the street on summer mornings; deep-furrowed cabbage-leaves at the greengrocer's; magnificence of oranges in wheelbarrows round the corner; and Thames' shore within three minutes' race.

None of these things very glorious; the best, however, that England, it seems, was then able to provide for a boy of gift: who, such as they are, loves them—never, indeed, forgets them. The short waists modify to the last his visions of Greek ideal. His foregrounds had always a succulent cluster or two of greengrocery at the corners. Enchanted oranges gleam in Covent Gardens of the Hesperides; and great ships go to pieces in order to scatter chests of them on the waves. That mist of early sunbeams in the London dawn crosses, many and many a time, the clearness of Italian air; and by Thames' shore, with its stranded barges and glidings of red sail, dearer to us than Lucerne lake or Venetian lagoon—by Thames' shore we will die.

With such circumstance round him in youth, let us note what necessary effects followed upon the boy. I assume him to have had Giorgione's sensibility (and more than Giorgione's, if that be possible) to colour and form. I tell you further, and this fact you may receive trustfully, that his sensibility to human affection and distress was no less keen than even his sense for natural beauty—heart-sight deep as eyesight.

Consequently, he attaches himself with the faithfullest child-love to everything that bears an image of the place he was born in. No matter how ugly it is—has it anything about it like Maiden Lane, or like Thames' shore? If so, it shall be painted for their sake. Hence, to the very close of life, Turner could endure uglinesses which no one else, of the same sensibility, would have borne with for an instant. Dead brick walls, blank square windows, old clothes, market-womanly types of humanity—anything fishy and muddy, like Billingsgate or Hungerford Market, had great attraction for him; black barges, patched sails, and every possible condition of fog.

You will find these tolerations and affections guiding or sustaining him to the last hour of his life; the notablest of all such endurances being that of dirt. No Venetian ever draws anything foul; but Turner devoted picture after picture to the illustration of effects of dinginess, smoke, soot, dust, and dusty texture; old sides of boats, weedy roadside vegetation, dung-hills, straw-yards, and all the soilings and stains of every common labour.

And more than this, he not only could endure, but enjoyed and looked for *litter*, like Covent Garden wreck after the market. His pictures are often full of it, from side to side; their foregrounds differ from all others in the natural way that things have of lying about in them. Even his richest vegetation, in ideal work, is confused; and he delights in shingle, débris, and heaps of fallen stones. The last words he ever spoke to me about a picture were in gentle exultation about his St. Gothard: "that *litter* of stones which I endeavoured to represent."

The second great result of this Covent Garden training was, understanding of and regard for the poor, whom the Venetians, we saw, despised; whom, contrarily, Turner loved, and more than loved—understood. He got no romantic sight of them, but an infallible one, as he prowled about the end of his lane, watching night effects in the wintry streets; nor sight of the poor alone, but of the poor in direct relations with the rich. He knew, in good and evil, what both classes thought of, and how they dealt with, each other.

Reynolds and Gainsborough, bred in country villages, learned there the country boy's reverential theory of "the squire," and kept it. They painted the squire and the squire's lady as centres of the movements of the universe, to the end of their lives. But Turner perceived the younger squire in other aspects about his lane, occurring prominently in its night scenery, as a dark figure, or one of two, against the moonlight. He saw also the working of city commerce, from endless warehouse, towering over Thames, to the back shop in the lane, with its stale herrings—highly interesting these last; one of his father's best friends, whom he often afterwards visited affectionately at Bristol, being a fishmonger

and glue-boiler; which gives us a friendly turn of mind towards herring-fishing, whaling, Calais *poissardes*, and many other of our choicest subjects in after life; all this being connected with that mysterious forest below London Bridge on one side; and, on the other, with these masses of human power and national wealth which weigh upon us, at Covent Garden here, with strange compression, and crush us into narrow Hand Court.

"That mysterious forest below London Bridge"—better for the boy than wood of pine, or grove of myrtle. How he must have tormented the watermen, beseeching them to let him crouch anywhere in the bows, quiet as a log, so only that he might get floated down there among the ships, and round and round the ships, and with the ships, and by the ships, and under the ships, staring, and clambering—these the only quite beautiful things he can see in all the world, except the sky; but these, when the sun is on their sails, filling or falling, endlessly disordered by sway of tide and stress of anchorage, beautiful unspeakably; which ships also are inhabited by glorious creatures—red-faced sailors, with pipes, appearing over the gunwales, true knights, over their castle parapets—the most angelic beings in the whole compass of London world. And Trafalgar happening long before we can draw ships, we, nevertheless, coax all current stories out of the wounded sailors, do our best at present to show Nelson's funeral streaming up the Thames; and vow that Trafalgar shall have its tribute of memory some day. Which, accordingly, is accomplished—once, with all our might, for its death; twice, with all our might, for its victory; thrice, in pensive farewell to the old *Temeraire*, and, with it, to that order of things.

Now this fond companying with sailors must have divided his time, it appears to me, pretty equally between Covent Garden and Wapping (allowing for incidental excursions to Chelsea on one side, and Greenwich on the other), which time he would spend pleasantly, but not magnificently, being limited in pocket-money, and leading a kind of "Poor-Jack life on the river.

In some respects, no life could be better for a lad. But it

was not calculated to make his ear fine to the niceties of language, nor form his moralities on an entirely regular standard. Picking up his first scraps of vigorous English chiefly at Deptford and in the markets, and his first ideas of female tenderness and beauty among nymphs of the barge and the barrow, another boy might, perhaps, have become what people usually term "vulgar." But the original make and frame of Turner's mind being not vulgar, but as nearly as possible a combination of the minds of Keats and Dante, joining capricious waywardness, and intense openness to every fine pleasure of sense, and hot defiance of formal precedent, with a quite infinite tenderness, generosity, and desire of justice and truth—this kind of mind did not become vulgar, but very tolerant of vulgarity, even fond of it in some forms; and, on the outside, visibly infected by it, deeply enough; the curious result, in its combination of elements, being to most people wholly incomprehensible. It was as if a cable had been woven of blood-crimson silk, and then tarred on the outside. People handled it, and the tar came off on their hands; red gleams were seen through the black, underneath, at the places where it had been strained. Was it ochre?—said the world—or red lead?

Schooled thus in manners, literature, and general moral principles at Chelsea and Wapping, we have finally to inquire concerning the most important point of all. We have seen the principal differences between this boy and Giorgione, as respects sight of the beautiful, understanding of poverty, of commerce, and of order of battle; then follows another cause of difference in our training—not slight—the aspect of religion, namely, in the neighbourhood of Covent Garden. I say the aspect; for that was all the lad could judge by. Disposed, for the most part, to learn chiefly by his eyes, in this special matter he finds there is really no other way of learning. His father taught him "to lay one penny upon another." Of mother's teaching, we hear of none; of parish pastoral teaching, the reader may guess how much.

I chose Giorgione rather than Veronese to help me in carrying out this parallel; because I do not find in Giorgione's work any of the early Venetian monachist element. He

seems to me to have belonged more to an abstract contemplative school. I may be wrong in this; it is no matter; suppose it were so, and that he came down to Venice somewhat recusant, or insentient, concerning the usual priestly doctrines of his day, how would the Venetian religion, from an outer intellectual standing-point, have *looked* to him?

He would have seen it to be a religion indisputably powerful in human affairs; often very harmfully so; sometimes devouring widows' houses, and consuming the strongest and fairest from among the young; freezing into merciless bigotry the policy of the old: also, on the other hand, animating national courage, and raising souls, otherwise sordid, into heroism: on the whole, always a real and great power; served with daily sacrifice of gold, time, and thought; putting forth its claims, if hypocritically, at least in bold hypocrisy, not waiving any atom of them in doubt or fear; and, assuredly, in large measure, sincere, believing in itself, and believed: a goodly system, moreover, in aspect; gorgeous, harmonious, mysterious—a thing which had either to be obeyed or combated, but could not be scorned. A religion towering over all the city—many buttressed—luminous in marble stateliness, as the dome of our Lady of Safety shines over the sea; many-voiced also, giving, over all the eastern seas, to the sentinel his watchword, to the soldier his war-cry; and, on the lips of all who died for Venice, shaping the whisper of death.

I suppose the boy Turner to have regarded the religion of his city also from an external intellectual standing-point.

What did he see in Maiden Lane?

Let not the reader be offended with me; I am willing to let him describe, at his own pleasure, what Turner saw there; but to me, it seems to have been this. A religion maintained occasionally, even the whole length of the lane, at point of constable's staff; but, at other times, placed under the custody of the beadle, within certain black and unstately iron railings of St. Paul's, Covent Garden. Among the wheelbarrows and over the vegetables, no perceptible dominance of religion; in the narrow, disquieted streets, none; in the tongues, deeds, daily ways of Maiden Lane, little. Some honesty, indeed,

and English industry, and kindness of heart, and general idea of justice; but faith, of any national kind, shut up from one Sunday to the next, not artistically beautiful even in those Sabbatical exhibitions; its paraphernalia being chiefly of high pews, heavy elocution, and cold grimness of behaviour.

What chiaroscuro belongs to it—(dependent mostly on candlelight)—we will, however, draw, considerately; no goodliness of escutcheon, nor other respectability being omitted, and the best of their results confessed, a meek old woman and a child being let into a pew, for whom the reading by candlelight will be beneficial.[1]

For the rest, this religion seems to him discreditable—discredited—not believing in itself; putting forth its authority in a cowardly way, watching how far it might be tolerated, continually shrinking, disclaiming, fencing, finessing; divided against itself, not by stormy rents, but by thin fissures, and splittings of plaster from the walls. Not to be either obeyed, or combated, by an ignorant, yet clear-sighted youth; only to be scorned. And scorned not one whit the less, though also the dome dedicated to *it* looms high over distant winding of the Thames; as St. Mark's campanile rose, for goodly landmark, over mirage of lagoon. For St. Mark ruled over life; the Saint of London over death; St. Mark over St. Mark's Place, but St. Paul over St. Paul's Churchyard.

Under these influences pass away the first reflective hours of life, with such conclusion as they can reach. In consequence of a fit of illness, he was taken—I cannot ascertain in what year—to live with an aunt, at Brentford; and here, I believe, received some schooling, which he seems to have snatched vigorously; getting knowledge, at least by translation, of the more picturesque classical authors, which he turned presently to use, as we shall see. Hence also, walks about Putney and Twickenham in the summer time acquainted him with the look of English meadow-ground in its restricted

[1] *Liber Studiorum*, "Interior of a church." It is worthy of remark that Giorgione and Titian are always delighted to have an opportunity of drawing priests. The English Church may, perhaps, accept it as matter of congratulation that this is the only instance in which Turner drew a clergyman.

states of paddock and park; and with some round-headed appearances of trees, and stately entrances to houses of mark: the avenue at Bushy, and the iron gates and carved pillars of Hampton, impressing him apparently with great awe and admiration; so that in after life his little country house is—of all places in the world—at Twickenham! Of swans and reedy shores he now learns the soft motion and the green mystery, in a way not to be forgotten.

And at last fortune wills that the lad's true life shall begin; and one summer's evening, after various wonderful stage-coach experiences on the north road, which gave him a love of stage-coaches ever after, he finds himself sitting alone among the Yorkshire hills.[1] For the first time, the silence of Nature round him, her freedom sealed to him, her glory opened to him. Peace at last; no roll of cart-wheel, nor mutter of sullen voices in the back shop; but curlew-cry in space of heaven, and welling of bell-toned streamlet by its shadowy rock. Freedom at last. Dead-wall, dark railing, fenced field, gated garden, all passed away like the dream of a prisoner; and behold, far as foot or eye can race or range, the moor, and cloud. Loveliness at last. It is here then, among these deserted vales! Not among men. Those pale, poverty-struck, or cruel faces—that multitudinous, marred humanity—are not the only things that God has made. Here is something He has made which no one has marred. Pride of purple rocks, and river pools of blue, and tender wilderness of glittering trees, and misty lights of evening on immeasurable hills.

Beauty, and freedom, and peace; and yet another teacher, graver than these. Sound preaching at last here, in Kirkstall crypt, concerning fate and life. Here, where the dark pool reflects the chancel pillars, and the cattle lie in unhindered rest, the soft sunshine on their dappled bodies, instead of priests' vestments; their white furry hair ruffled a little, fitfully, by the evening wind, deep-scented from the meadow thyme.

[1] I do not mean that this is his first acquaintance with the country, but the first impressive and touching one, after his mind was formed. The earliest sketches I found in the National collection are at Clifton and Bristol; the next, at Oxford.

Consider deeply the import to him of this, his first sight of ruin, and compare it with the effect of the architecture that was around Giorgione. There were indeed aged buildings, at Venice, in his time, but none in decay. All ruin was removed, and its place filled as quickly as in our London; but filled always by architecture loftier and more wonderful than that whose place it took, the boy himself happy to work upon the walls of it; so that the idea of the passing away of the strength of men and beauty of their works never could occur to him sternly. Brighter and brighter the cities of Italy had been rising and broadening on hill and plain, for three hundred years. He saw only strength and immortality, could not but paint both; conceived the form of man as deathless, calm with power, and fiery with life.

Turner saw the exact reverse of this. In the present work of men, meanness, aimlessness, unsightliness: thin-walled, lath-divided, narrow-garreted houses of clay; booths of a darksome Vanity Fair, busily base.

But on Whitby Hill, and by Bolton Brook, remained traces of other handiwork. Men who could build had been there; and who also had wrought, not merely for their own days. But to what purpose? Strong faith, and steady hands, and patient souls—can this, then, be all you have left! this the sum of your doing on the earth!—a nest whence the night-owl may whimper to the brook, and a ribbed skeleton of consumed arches, looming above the bleak banks of mist, from its cliff to the sea?

As the strength of men to Giorgione, to Turner their weakness and vileness, were alone visible. They themselves, unworthy or ephemeral; their work, despicable, or decayed. In the Venetian's eyes, all beauty depended on man's presence and pride; in Turner's, on the solitude he had left, and the humiliation he had suffered.

And thus the fate and issue of all his work were determined at once. He must be a painter of the strength of nature, there was no beauty elsewhere than in that; he must paint also the labour and sorrow and passing away of men; this was the great human truth visible to him.

Their labour, their sorrow, and their death. Mark the

three. Labour; by sea and land, in field and city, at forge and furnace, helm and plough. No pastoral indolence nor classic pride shall stand between him and the troubling of the world; still less between him and the toil of his country—blind, tormented, unwearied, marvellous England.

Also their Sorrow; Ruin of all their glorious work, passing away of their thoughts and their honour, mirage of pleasure, FALLACY OF HOPE; gathering of weed on temple step; gaining of wave on deserted strand; weeping of the mother for the children, desolate by her breathless first-born in the streets of the city,[1] desolate by her last sons slain, among the beasts of the field.[2]

And their Death. That old Greek question again—yet unanswered. The unconquerable spectre still flitting among the forest trees at twilight; rising ribbed out of the sea-sand—white, a strange Aphrodite, out of the sea-foam; stretching its grey, cloven wings among the clouds; turning the light of their sunsets into blood. This has to be looked upon, and in a more terrible shape than ever Salvator or Dürer saw it. The wreck of one guilty country does not infer the ruin of all countries, and need not cause general terror respecting the laws of the universe. Neither did the orderly and narrow succession of domestic joy and sorrow in a small German community bring the question in its breadth, or in any unresolvable shape, before the mind of Dürer. But the English death—the European death of the nineteenth century—was of another range and power; more terrible a thousand-fold in its merely physical grasp and grief; more terrible, incalculably, in its mystery and shame. What were the robber's casual pang, or the rage of the flying skirmish, compared to the work of the axe, and the sword, and the famine, which was done during this man's youth on all the hills and plains of the Christian earth, from Moscow to Gibraltar. He was eighteen years old when Napoleon came down on Arcola. Look on the map of Europe, and count the blood-stains on it, between Arcola and Waterloo.

Not alone those blood-stains on the Alpine snow, and the

[1] "The Tenth Plague of Egypt."
[2] "Rizpah, the Daughter of Aiah."

blue of the Lombard plain. The English death was before his eyes also. No decent, calculable, consoled dying; no passing to rest like that of the aged burghers of Nuremberg town. No gentle processions to churchyards among the fields, the bronze crests bossed deep on the memorial tablets, and the skylark singing above them from among the corn. But the life trampled out in the slime of the street, crushed to dust amidst the roaring of the wheel, tossed countlessly away into howling winter wind along five hundred leagues of rock-fanged shore. Or, worst of all, rotted down to forgotten graves through years of ignorant patience, and vain seeking for help from man, for hope in God—infirm, imperfect yearning, as of motherless infants starving at the dawn; oppressed royalties of captive thought, vague ague-fits of bleak, amazed despair.

A goodly landscape this, for the lad to paint, and under a goodly light. Wide enough the light was, and clear; no more Salvator's lurid chasm on jagged horizon, nor Dürer's spotted rest of sunny gleam on hedgerow and field; but light over all the world. Full shone now its awful globe, one pallid charnel-house—a ball strewn bright with human ashes, glaring in poised sway beneath the sun, all blinding-white with death from pole to pole—death, not of myriads of poor bodies only, but of will, and mercy, and conscience; death, not once inflicted on the flesh, but daily fastening on the spirit; death, not silent or patient, waiting his appointed hour, but voiceful, venomous; death with the taunting word, and burning grasp, and infixed sting.

"Put ye in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe." The word is spoken in our ears continually to other reapers than the angels,—to the busy skeletons that never tire for stooping. When the measure of iniquity is full, and it seems that another day might bring repentance and redemption: "Put ye in the sickle." When the young life has been wasted all away, and the eyes are just opening upon the tracks of ruin, and faint resolution rising in the heart for nobler things: "Put ye in the sickle." When the roughest blows of fortune have been borne long and bravely, and the hand is just stretched to grasp its goal: "Put ye in the sickle." And

when there are but a few in the midst of a nation, to save it, or to teach, or to cherish; and all its life is bound up in those few golden ears: "Put ye in the sickle, pale reapers, and pour hemlock for your feast of harvest home."

This was the sight which opened on the young eyes, this the watchword sounding within the heart of Turner in his youth.

So taught, and prepared for his life's labour, sate the boy at last alone among his fair English hills; and began to paint, with cautious toil, the rocks, and fields, and trickling brooks, and soft white clouds of heaven.

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63. A Turner Picture—The Garden of the Hesperides.

THE fable of the Hesperides had, it seems to me, in the Greek mind two distinct meanings; the first referring to natural phenomena, and the second to moral. The natural meaning of it I believe to have been this:

The Garden of the Hesperides was supposed to exist in the westernmost part of the Cyrenaica; it was generally the expression for the beauty and luxuriant vegetation of the coast of Africa in that district. The centre of the Cyrenaica "is occupied by a moderately elevated table-land, whose edge runs parallel to the coast, to which it sinks down in a succession of terraces, clothed with verdure, intersected by mountain streams running through ravines filled with the richest vegetation; well watered by frequent rains, exposed to the cool sea breeze from the north, and sheltered by the mass of the mountain from the sands and hot winds of the Sahara."[1]

The Greek colony of Cyrene itself was founded ten miles from the sea-shore, "in a spot backed by the mountains on the south, and thus sheltered from the fiery blasts of the desert; while at the height of about 1,800 feet an inexhaustible spring bursts forth amidst luxuriant vegetation, and pours

[1] Smith's *Dictionary of Greek and Roman Geography:* art. Cyrenaica.

its waters down to the Mediterranean through a most beautiful ravine."

The nymphs of the west, or Hesperides, are therefore, I believe, as natural types, the representatives of the soft western winds and sunshine, which were in this district most favourable to vegetation. In this sense, they are called daughters of Atlas and Hesperis, the western winds being cooled by the snow of Atlas. The dragon, on the contrary, is the representative of the Sahara wind, or simoom, which blew over the garden from above the hills on the south, and forbade all advance of cultivation beyond their ridge. Whether this was the physical meaning of the tradition in the Greek mind or not, there can be no doubt of its being Turner's first interpretation of it. A glance at the picture may determine this: a clear fountain being made the principal object in the foreground—a bright and strong torrent in the distance—while the dragon, wrapped in flame and whirlwind, watches from the top of the cliff.

But, both in the Greek mind and in Turner's, this natural meaning of the legend was a completely subordinate one. The moral significance of it lay far deeper. In the second, but principal sense, the Hesperides were not daughters of Atlas, nor connected with the winds of the west, but with its splendour. They are properly the nymphs of the sunset, and are the daughters of night, having many brothers and sisters, of whom I shall take Hesiod's account.

"And the Night begat Doom, and short-withering Fate, and Death.

"And begat Sleep, and the company of Dreams, and Censure, and Sorrow.

"And the Hesperides, who keep the golden fruit beyond the mighty Sea.

"And the Destinies, and the Spirits of merciless punishment.

"And Jealousy, and Deceit, and Wanton Love; and Old Age, that fades away; and Strife, whose will endures."

We have not, I think, hitherto quite understood the Greek feeling about those nymphs and their golden apples, coming as a light in the midst of cloud; between Censure,

and Sorrow—and the Destinies. We must look to the precise meaning of Hesiod's words, in order to get the force of the passage.

"The Night begat Doom;" that is to say, the doom of unforeseen accident—doom essentially of darkness.

"And short-withering Fate." Ill translated. I cannot do it better. It means especially the sudden fate which brings untimely end to all purpose, and cuts off youth and its promise: called, therefore (the epithet hardly ever leaving it), "black Fate."

"And Death." This is the universal, inevitable death, opposed to the interfering, untimely death. These three are named as the elder children. Hesiod pauses, and repeats the word "begat" before going on to number the others.

"And begat Sleep, and the company of Dreams."

"And *Censure*." "Momus," the Spirit of Blame—the spirit which desires to blame rather than to praise; false, base, unhelpful, unholy judgment; ignorant and blind, child of the Night.

"And Sorrow." Accurately, sorrow of mourning; the sorrow of the night, when no man can work; of the night that falls when what was the light of the eyes is taken from us; lamenting, sightless sorrow, without hope—child of Night.

"And the Hesperides." We will come back to these.

"And the Destinies, and the Spirits of Merciless Punishment." These are the great Fates which have rule over conduct; the first Fate spoken of (short-withering) is that which has rule over occurrence. These great Fates are Clotho, Lachesis, Atropos. Their three powers are Clotho's over the clue, the thread, or connecting energy—that is, the conduct of life; Lachesis' over the lot—that is to say, the chance which warps, entangles, or bends the course of life. Atropos, inflexible, cuts the thread for ever.

"And Jealousy," especially the jealousy of Fortune, in balancing all good by evil. The Greeks had a peculiar dread of this form of fate.

"And Deceit, and sensual Love. And Old Age that fades, and Strife that endures;" that is to say, old age,

which, growing not in wisdom, is marked only by its failing power—by the gradual gaining of darkness on the faculties, and helplessness on the frame. Such age is the forerunner of true death—the child of Night. "And Strife," the last and the mightiest, the nearest to man of the Night-children —blind leader of the blind.

Understanding thus whose sisters they are, let us consider of the Hesperides themselves—spoken of commonly as the "Singing Nymphs." They are four.

Their names are Æglé, Brightness; Erytheia, Blushing; Hestia, the (spirit of the) Hearth; Arethusa, the Ministering.

O English reader, hast thou ever heard of these fair and true daughters of Sunset, beyond the mighty sea?

And was it not well to trust to such keepers the guarding of the golden fruit which the earth gave to Juno at her marriage? Not fruit only: fruit on the tree, given by the earth, the great mother, to Juno (female power), at her marriage with Jupiter, or *ruling* manly power (distinguished from the tried and *agonizing* strength of Hercules). I call Juno, briefly, female power. She is, especially, the goddess presiding over marriage, regarding the woman as the mistress of a household. Vesta (the goddess of the hearth [1]), with Ceres, and Venus, are variously dominant over marriage, as the fulfilment of love; but Juno is pre-eminently the housewives' goddess. She, therefore, represents, in her character, whatever good or evil may result from female ambition, or desire of power: and, as to a housewife, the earth presents its golden fruit to her, which she gives to two kinds of guardians. The wealth of the earth, as the source of household peace and plenty, is watched by the singing nymphs—the Hesperides. But, as the source of household sorrow and desolation, it is watched by the Dragon.

We must, therefore, see who the Dragon was, and what kind of dragon.

[1] Her name is also that of the Hesperid nymph; but I give the Hesperid her Greek form of name, to distinguish her from the goddess. The Hesperid Arethusa has the same subordinate relation to Ceres; and Erytheia, to Venus. Æglé signifies especially the spirit of brightness or cheerfulness; including even the subordinate idea of household neatness or cleanliness.

The reader will, perhaps, remember that we traced, in an earlier chapter, the birth of the Gorgons, through Phorcys and Ceto, from Nereus. The youngest child of Phorcys and Ceto is the Dragon of the Hesperides; but this latest descent is not, as in Northern traditions, a sign of fortunateness: on the contrary, the children of Nereus receive gradually more and more terror and power, as they are later born, till this last of the Nereids unites horror and power at their utmost. Observe the gradual change. Nereus himself is said to have been perfectly *true*, and *gentle*.

This is Hesiod's account of him:

"And Pontus begat Nereus, simple and true, the oldest of children; but they call him the aged man, in that he is errorless and kind; neither forgets he what is right; but knows all just and gentle counsel."

Now the children of Nereus, like the Hesperides themselves, bear a twofold typical character; one physical, the other moral. In his physical symbolism, Nereus himself is the calm and gentle sea, from which rise, in gradual increase of terror, the clouds and storms. In his moral character, Nereus is the type of the deep, pure, rightly-tempered human mind, from which, in gradual degeneracy, spring the troubling passions.

Keeping this double meaning in view, observe the whole line of descent to the Hesperides' Dragon. Nereus, by the Earth, begets (1) Thaumas (the wonderful), physically, the father of the Rainbow; morally, the type of the enchantments and dangers of imagination. His grandchildren, besides the Rainbow, are the Harpies. 2. Phorcys (Orcus?), physically, the treachery or devouring spirit of the sea; morally, covetousness or malignity of heart. 3. Ceto, physically, the deep places of the sea; morally, secretness of heart, called "fair-cheeked," because tranquil in outward aspect. 4. Eurybia (wide strength), physically, the flowing, especially the tidal power of the sea (she, by one of the sons of Heaven, becomes the mother of three great Titans, one of whom, Astræus, and the Dawn, are the parents of the four Winds); morally, the healthy passion of the heart. Thus far the children of Nereus.

Next, Phorcys and Ceto, in their physical characters (the grasping or devouring of the sea, reaching out over the land, and its depth), beget the Clouds and Storms—namely, first, the Graiæ, or soft rain-clouds; then the Gorgons, or storm-clouds; and youngest and last, the Hesperides' Dragon,—Volcanic or earth-storm, associated, in conception, with the Simoom and fiery African winds.

But, in its moral significance, the descent is this. Covetousness, or malignity (Phorcys) and Secretness (Ceto), beget, first, the darkening passions, whose hair is always grey; then stormy and merciless passions, brazen-winged (the Gorgons), of whom the dominant, Medusa, is ice-cold, turning all who look on her to stone. And, lastly, the consuming (poisonous and volcanic) passions—the "flame-backed dragon," uniting the powers of poison, and instant destruction. Now the reader may have heard, perhaps, in other books of Genesis than Hesiod's, of a dragon being busy about a tree which bore apples, and of crushing the head of that dragon; but seeing how, in the Greek mind, this serpent was descended from the sea, he may, perhaps, be surprised to remember another verse, bearing also on the matter: "Thou brakest the heads of the dragons in the waters;" and yet more surprised, going on with the Septuagint version, to find where he is being led: "Thou brakest the head of the dragon, and gavest him to be meat to the Ethiopian people. Thou didst tear asunder the strong fountains and the storm-torrents; thou didst dry up the rivers of Etham, πηγὰς καὶ χειμάῤῥους, the Pegasus fountains—Etham on the edge of the wilderness."

Returning then to Hesiod, we find he tells us of the Dragon himself: "He, in the secret places of the desert land, kept the all-golden apples in his great knots" (coils of rope, or extremities of anything). With which compare Euripides' report of him: "And Hercules came to the Hesperian dome, to the singing maidens, plucking the apple fruit from the golden petals; slaying the flame-backed dragon, who twined round and round, kept guard in unapproachable spires" (spirals or whirls, as of a whirlwind-vortex).

Farther, we hear from other scattered syllables of tradition, that this dragon was sleepless, and that he was able to take various tones of human voice.

And we find a later tradition than Hesiod's calling him a child of Typhon and Echidna. Now Typhon is volcanic storm, generally the evil spirit of tumult.

Echidna (the adder) is a descendant of Medusa. She is a daughter of Chrysaor (the lightning), by Calliröe (the fair flowing), a daughter of Ocean; that is to say, she joins the intense fatality of the lightning with perfect gentleness. In form she is half-maiden, half-serpent; therefore she is the spirit of all the fatallest evil, veiled in gentleness: or, in one word, treachery—having dominion over many gentle things —and chiefly over a kiss, given, indeed, in another garden than that of the Hesperides, yet in relation to keeping of treasure also.

Having got this farther clue, let us look who it is whom Dante makes the typical Spirit of Treachery. The eighth or lowest pit of hell is given to its keeping; at the edge of which pit, Virgil casts a *rope* down for a signal; instantly there rises, as from the sea, "as one returns who hath been down to loose some anchor," "the fell monster with the deadly sting, who passes mountains, breaks through fenced walls, and firm embattled spears; and with his filth taints all the world."

Think for an instant of another place: "Sharp stones are under him, he laugheth at the shaking of a spear." We must yet keep to Dante, however. Echidna, remember, is half-maiden, half-serpent; hear what Dante's Fraud is like:

> Forthwith that image vile of Fraud appear'd,
> His head and upper part exposed on land,
> But laid not on the shore his bestial train.
> His face the semblance of a just man's wore,
> So kind and gracious was its outward cheer;
> The rest was serpent all: two shaggy claws
> Reach'd to the armpits; and the back and breast,
> And either side, were painted o'er with nodes
> And orbits. Colours variegated more
> Nor Turks nor Tartars e'er on cloth of state
> With interchangeable embroidery wove,
> Nor spread Arachne o'er her curious loom.

As oft-times a light skiff moor'd to the shore,
Stands part in water, part upon the land;
Or, as where dwells the greedy German boor,
The beaver settles, watching for his prey;
So on the rim, that fenced the sand with rock,
Sat perch'd the fiend of evil. In the void
Glancing, his tail upturn'd, its venomous fork
With sting like scorpion's armed.

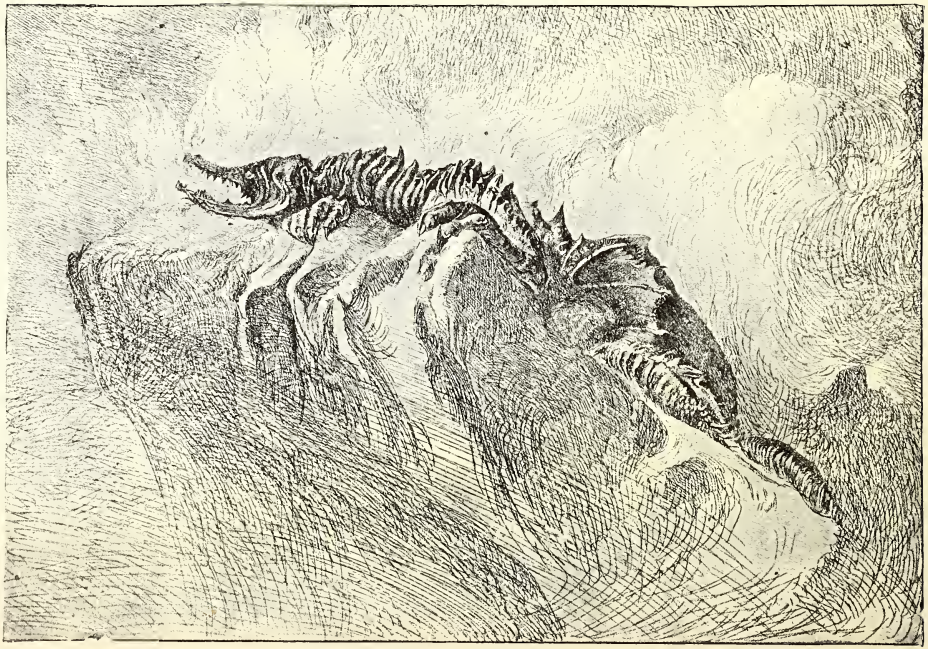
You observe throughout this description the leaning on the character of the *Sea* Dragon; a little farther on, his way of flying is told us:

As a small vessel, backing out from land,
Her station quits; so thence the monster loos'd,
And, when he felt himself at large, turn'd round
There, where the breast had been, his forked tail.
Thus, like an eel, outstretch'd, at length he steer'd,
Gathering the air up with retractile claws.

And, lastly, his name is told us: Geryon. Whereupon, looking back to Hesiod, we find that Geryon is Echidna's brother. Man-serpent, therefore, in Dante, as Echidna is woman-serpent.

We find next that Geryon lived in the island of Erytheia (blushing), only another kind of blushing than that of the Hesperid Erytheia. But it is on, also, a western island, and Geryon kept red oxen in it (said to be near the red setting sun); and Hercules kills him, as he does the Hesperian dragon: but in order to be able to reach him, a golden boat is given to Hercules by the Sun, to cross the sea in.

We will return to this part of the legend presently, having enough of it now collected to get at the complete idea of the Hesperian dragon, who is, in fine, the "Pluto il gran nemico" of Dante; the demon of all evil passions connected with covetousness; that is to say, essentially of fraud, rage, and gloom. Regarded as the demon of Fraud, he is said to be descended from the viper Echidna, full of deadly cunning, in whirl on whirl; as the demon of consuming Rage, from Phorcys; as the demon of Gloom, from Ceto—in his watching and melancholy, he is sleepless (compare the Micyllus dialogue of Lucian); breathing whirlwind and fire,



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he is the destroyer, descended from Typhon as well as Phorcys; having, moreover, with all these, the irresistible strength of his ancestral sea.

Now, look at him, as Turner has drawn him (see facing page). I cannot reduce the creature to this scale without losing half his power; his length, especially, seems to diminish more than it should in proportion to his bulk. In the picture he is far in the distance, cresting the mountain; and may be, perhaps, three-quarters of a mile long. The actual length on the canvass is a foot and eight inches; so that it may be judged how much he loses by the reduction, not to speak of my imperfect etching,[1] and of the loss which, however well he might have been engraved, he would still have sustained, in the impossibility of expressing the lurid colour of his armour, alternate bronze and blue.

Still, the main points of him are discernible enough; and among all the wonderful things that Turner did in his day, I think this nearly the most wonderful. How far he had really found out for himself the collateral bearings of the Hesperid tradition I know not; but that he had got the main clue of it, and knew who the Dragon was, there can be no doubt; the strange thing is, that his conception of it throughout, down to the minutest detail, fits every one of the circumstances of the Greek traditions. There is, first, the Dragon's descent from Medusa and Typhon, indicated in the serpent-clouds floating from his head; then note the grovelling and ponderous body, ending in a serpent, of which we do not see the end. He drags the weight of it forward by his claws, not being able to lift himself from the ground ("Mammon, the least erected spirit that fell"); then the grip of the claws themselves as if they would clutch (rather than tear) the rock itself into pieces; but chiefly, the designing of the body. Remember, one of the essential characters of the creature, as descended from Medusa, is its coldness and petrifying power; this, in the demon of covetousness, must exist to the utmost; breathing fire, he is yet

[1] It is merely a sketch on the steel, like the illustrations before given of composition; but it marks the points needing note. Perhaps some day I may be able to engrave it of the full size.

himself of ice. Now, if I were merely to draw this dragon as white, instead of dark, and take his claws away, his body would become a representation of a great glacier, so nearly perfect, that I know no published engraving of glacier breaking over a rocky brow so like the truth as this dragon's shoulders would be, if they were thrown out in light; there being only this difference, that they have the form, but not the fragility of the ice: they are at once ice and iron. "His bones are like solid pieces of brass; his bones are like bars of iron; by his neesings a light doth shine."

The strange unity of vertebrated action, and of a true bony contour, infinitely varied in every vertebra, with this glacial outline;—together with the adoption of the head of the Ganges crocodile, the fish-eater, to show his sea descent (and this in the year 1806, when hardly a single fossil saurian skeleton existed within Turner's reach), renders the whole conception one of the most curious exertions of the imaginative intellect with which I am acquainted in the arts.

Thus far then, of the dragon; next, we have to examine the conception of the Goddess of Discord. We must return, for a moment, to the tradition about Geryon. I cannot yet decipher the meaning of his oxen, said to be fed together with those of Hades; nor of the journey of Hercules, in which, after slaying Geryon, he returns through Europe like a Border forager, driving these herds, and led into farther battle in protection or recovery of them. But it seems to me the main drift of the legend cannot be mistaken; *viz.* that Geryon is the evil spirit of wealth, as arising from commerce; hence, placed as a guardian of isles in the most distant sea, and reached in a golden boat; while the Hesperian dragon is the evil spirit of wealth, as possessed in households; and associated, therefore, with the true household guardians, or singing nymphs. Hercules (manly labour), slaying both Geryon and Ladon, presents oxen and apples to Juno, who is their proper mistress; but the Goddess of Discord, contriving that one portion of this household wealth shall be ill bestowed by Paris, he, according to Coleridge's interpretation, choosing pleasure instead of wisdom or power; there issue from this evil choice the

catastrophe of the Trojan war, and the wanderings of Ulysses, which are essentially, both in the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, the troubling of household peace; terminating with the restoration of this peace by repentance and patience; Helen and Penelope seen at last sitting upon their household thrones, in the Hesperian light of age.

We have, therefore, to regard Discord, in the Hesperides garden, eminently as the disturber of households, assuming a different aspect from Homer's wild and fierce discord of war. They are, nevertheless, one and the same power; for she changes her aspect at will. I cannot get at the root of her name, Eris. It seems to me as if it ought to have one in common with Erinnys (Fury); but it means always contention, emulation, or competition, either in mind or in words; the final work of Eris is essentially "division," and she is herself always double-minded; shouts two ways at once (in *Iliad*, xi. 6), and wears a mantle rent in half (*Æneid*, viii. 702). Homer makes her loud-voiced, and insatiably covetous. This last attribute is, with him, the source of her usual title. She is little when she first is seen, then rises till her head touches heaven. By Virgil she is called mad; and her hair is of serpents, bound with bloody garlands.

This is the conception first adopted by Turner, but combined with another which he found in Spenser; only note that there is some confusion in the minds of English poets between Eris (Discord) and Até (Error), who is a daughter of Discord, according to Hesiod. She is properly—mischievous error, tender-footed; for she does not walk on the earth, but on heads of men (*Iliad*, xix. 92); *i.e.*, not on the solid ground, but on human vain thoughts; therefore, her hair is glittering (*Iliad*, xix. 126). I think she is mainly the confusion of mind coming of pride, as Eris comes of covetousness; therefore, Homer makes her a daughter of Jove. Spenser, under the name of Até, describes Eris. I have referred to his account of her in my notice of the Discord on the Ducal palace of Venice (remember the inscription there, *Discordia sum, discordans*). But the stanzas from which Turner derived his conception of her are these:

Als, as she double spake, so heard she double,
With matchlesse eares deformèd and distort,
Fild with false rumors and seditious trouble,
Bred in assemblies of the vulgar sort,
That still are led with every light report:
And as her eares, so eke her feet were odde,
And much unlike; th' one long, the other short,
And both misplast; that, when th' one forward yode,
The other backe retirèd and contrárie trode.

Likewise unequall were her handès twaine;
That one did reach, the other pusht away;
That one did make, the other mard againe,
And sought to bring all things unto decay;
Whereby great riches, gathered manie a day,
She in short space did often bring to nought,
An their possessours often did dismay:
For all her studie was, and all her thought
How she might overthrow the things that Concord wrought.

So much her malice did her might surpas,
That even th' Almightie selfe she did maligne,
Because to man so mercifull He was,
And unto all His creatures so benigne,
Sith she herself was of his grace indigne:
For all this worlds faire workmanship she tride
Unto his last confusion to bring,
And that great golden chaine quite to divide,
With which it blessed Concord had together tide.

All these circumstances of decrepitude and distortion Turner has followed, through hand and limb, with patient care: he has added one final touch of his own. The nymph who brings the apples to the goddess, offers her one in each hand; and Eris, of the divided mind, cannot choose.

One farther circumstance must be noted, in order to complete our understanding of the picture,—the gloom extending, not to the dragon only, but also to the fountain and the tree of golden fruit. The reason of this gloom may be found in two other passages of the authors from which Turner had taken his conception of Eris—Virgil and Spenser. For though the Hesperides in their own character, as the nymphs of domestic joy, are entirely bright (and the garden always bright around them), yet seen or remembered in sorrow, or in the presence of discord, they deepen distress. Their entirely happy character is given by

Euripides: "The fruit-planted shore of the Hesperides—songstresses—where the ruler of the purple lake allows not any more to the sailor his way, assigning the boundary of Heaven, which Atlas holds; where the ambrosial fountains flow, and the fruitful and divine land increases the happiness of the gods."

But to the thoughts of Dido, in her despair, they recur under another aspect; she remembers their priestess as a great enchantress; who *feeds the dragon* and preserves the boughs of the tree; sprinkling moist honey and drowsy poppy; who also has power over ghosts; "and the earth shakes and the forests stoop from the hills at her bidding."

This passage Turner must have known well, from his continual interest in Carthage: but his diminution of the splendour of the old Greek garden was certainly caused chiefly by Spenser's describing the Hesperides fruit as growing first in the garden of Mammon:

> There mournfull cypresse grew in greatest store;
> And trees of bitter gall; and heben sad;
> Dead sleeping poppy; and black hellebore;
> Cold coloquintida; and tetra mad;
> Mortal samnitis; and cicuta bad,
> With which th' uniust Atheniens made to dy
> Wise Socrates, who, thereof quaffing glad,
> Pourd out his life and last philosophy.
> * * * *
> The gardin of Prosérpina this hight:
> And in the midst thereof a silver seat,
> With a thick arber goodly over dight,
> In which she often usd from open heat
> Herselfe to shroud, and pleasures to entreat:
> Next thereunto did grow a goodly tree,
> With braunches broad dispredd and body great,
> Clothèd with leaves, that none the wood mote see,
> And loaden all with fruit as thick as it might bee.
>
> Their fruit were golden apples glistring bright,
> That goodly was their glory to behold;
> On earth like never grew, ne living wight
> Like ever saw, but they from hence were sold;
> For those, which Hercules with conquest bold
> Got from great Atlas daughters, hence began.
> * * * *

Here eke that famous golden apple grew,
The which emongst the gods false Até threw.

There are two collateral evidences in the picture of Turner's mind having been partly influenced by this passage. The excessive darkness of the stream—though one of the Cyrene fountains—to remind us of Cocytus; and the breaking of the bough of the tree by the weight of its apples—not healthily, but as a diseased tree would break.

Such then is our English painter's first great religious picture; and exponent of our English faith. A sad-coloured work, not executed in Angelico's white and gold; nor in Perugino's crimson and azure; but in a sulphurous hue, as relating to a paradise of smoke. That power, it appears, on the hill-top, is our British Madonna; whom, reverently, the English devotional painter must paint, thus enthroned, with nimbus about the gracious head. Our Madonna—or our Jupiter on Olympus—or, perhaps more accurately still, our unknown god, sea-born, with the cliffs, not of Cyrene, but of England, for his altar; and no chance of any Mars' Hill proclamation concerning him, "whom therefore ye ignorantly worship."

This is no irony. The fact is verily so. The greatest man of our England, in the first half of the nineteenth century, in the strength and hope of his youth, perceives this to be the thing he has to tell us of utmost moment, connected with the spiritual world. In each city and country of past time, the master-minds had to declare the chief worship which lay at the nation's heart; to define it; adorn it; show the range and authority of it. Thus in Athens, we have the triumph of Pallas; and in Venice the Assumption of the Virgin; here, in England, is our great spiritual fact for ever interpreted to us—the Assumption of the Dragon. No St. George any more to be heard of; no more dragon-slaying possible: this child, born on St. George's Day, can only make manifest the dragon, not slay him, sea-serpent as he is; whom the English Andromeda, not fearing, takes for her lord. The fairy English Queen once thought to command the waves, but it is the sea-dragon now who commands her valleys; of old the Angel of the Sea

ministered to them, but now the Serpent of the Sea; where once flowed their clear springs now spreads the black Cocytus pool; and the fair blooming of the Hesperid meadows fades into ashes beneath the Nereid's Guard.

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64. Peace.

LOOKING back over what I have written, I find that I have only now the power of ending this work; it being time that it should end, but not of "concluding" it; for it has led me into fields of infinite inquiry, where it is only possible to break off with such imperfect result as may, at any given moment, have been attained.

Full of far deeper reverence for Turner's art than I felt when this task of his defence was undertaken (which may, perhaps, be evidenced by my having associated no other names with his—but of the dead—in my speaking of him throughout this volume[1]), I am more in doubt respecting the real use to mankind of that, or any other transcendent art; incomprehensible as it must always be to the mass of men. Full of far deeper love for what I remember of Turner himself, as I become better capable of understanding it, I find myself more and more helpless to explain his errors and his sins.

His errors, I might say, simply. Perhaps, some day, people will again begin to remember the force of the old Greek word for sin; and to learn that all sin is in essence—"Missing the mark;" losing sight or consciousness of heaven; and that this loss may be various in its guilt: it cannot be judged by us. It is this of which the words are

[1] It is proper, however, for the reader to know, that the title which I myself originally intended for this book was *Turner and the Ancients;* nor did I purpose to refer in it to any other modern painters than Turner. The title was changed; and the notes on other living painters inserted in the first volume, in deference to the advice of friends, probably wise; for, unless the change had been made, the book might never have been read at all. But, as far as I am concerned, I regretted the change then, and regret it still.

spoken so sternly: "Judge not;" which words people always quote, I observe, when they are called upon to "do judgment and justice." For it is truly a pleasant thing to condemn men for their wanderings; but it is a bitter thing to acknowledge a truth, or to take any bold share in working out an equity. So that the habitual modern practical application of the precept "Judge not" is to avoid the trouble of pronouncing verdict, by taking, of any matter, the pleasantest malicious view which first comes to hand; and to obtain license for our own convenient iniquities, by being indulgent to those of others.

These two methods of obedience being just the two which are most directly opposite to the law of mercy and truth.

"Bind them about thy neck." I said but now that of an evil tree men never gathered good fruit. And the lesson we have finally to learn from Turner's life is broadly this, that all the power of it came of its mercy and sincerity; all the failure of it, from its want of faith. It has been asked of me, by several of his friends, that I should endeavour to do some justice to his character, mistaken wholly by the world. If my life is spared, I will. But that character is still, in many respects, inexplicable to me; the materials within my reach are imperfect; and my experience in the world not yet large enough to enable me to use them justly. His life is to be written by a biographer, who will, I believe, spare no pains in collecting the few scattered records which exist of a career so uneventful and secluded. I will not anticipate the conclusions of this writer; but if they appear to me just, will endeavour afterwards, so far as may be in my power, to confirm and illustrate them; and, if unjust, to show in what degree.

Which, lest death or illness should forbid me, this only I declare now of what I know respecting Turner's character. Much of his mind and heart I do not know—perhaps, never shall know. But this much I do; and if there is anything in the previous course of this work to warrant trust in me of any kind, let me be trusted when I tell you, that Turner had a heart as intensely kind, and as nobly true, as ever God gave to one of His creatures. I offer, as yet, no evidence in

this matter. When I *do* give it, it shall be sifted and clear. Only this one fact I now record joyfully and solemnly, that, having known Turner for ten years, and that during the period of his life when the brightest qualities of his mind were, in many respects, diminished, and when he was suffering most from the evil-speaking of the world, I never heard him say one depreciating word of living man, or man's work; I never saw him look an unkind or blameful look; I never knew him let pass, without some sorrowful remonstrance, or endeavour at mitigation, a blameful word spoken by another.

Of no man but Turner, whom I have ever known, could I say this. And of this kindness and truth came, I repeat, all his highest power. And all his failure and error, deep and strange, came of his faithlessness.

Faithlessness, or despair, the despair which has been shown already to be characteristic of this present century, and most sorrowfully manifested in its greatest men; but existing in an infinitely more fatal form in the lower and general mind, reacting upon those who ought to be its teachers.

The form which the infidelity of England, especially, has taken, is one hitherto unheard of in human history. No nation ever before declared boldly, by print and word of mouth, that its religion was good for show, but "would not work." Over and over again it has happened that nations have denied their gods, but they denied them bravely. The Greeks in their decline jested at their religion, and frittered it away in flatteries and fine arts; the French refused theirs fiercely, tore down their altars and brake their carven images. The question about God with both these nations was still, even in their decline, fairly put, though falsely answered. "Either there is or is not a Supreme Ruler; we consider of it, declare there is not, and proceed accordingly." But we English have put the matter in an entirely new light: "There *is* a Supreme Ruler, no question of it, only He cannot rule. His orders won't work. He will be quite satisfied with euphonious and respectful repetition of them. Execution would be too dangerous under existing circumstances, which He certainly never contemplated."

I had no conception of the absolute darkness which has covered the national mind in this respect, until I began to come into collision with persons engaged in the study of economical and political questions. The entire *naïveté* and undisturbed imbecility with which I found them declare that the laws of the Devil were the only practicable ones, and that the laws of God were merely a form of poetical language, passed all that I had ever before heard or read of mortal infidelity. I knew the fool had often said in his heart, there was *no* God; but to hear him say clearly out with his lips "There is a foolish God" was something which my art studies had not prepared me for. The French had indeed, for a considerable time, hinted much of the meaning in the delicate and compassionate blasphemy of their phrase "*le bon Dieu*," but had never ventured to put it into more precise terms.

Now this form of unbelief in God is connected with, and necessarily productive of, a precisely equal unbelief in man.

Co-relative with the assertion "There is a foolish God" is the assertion "There is a brutish man." "As no laws but those of the Devil are practicable in the world, so no impulses but those of the brute" (says the modern political economist) "are appealable to in the world. Faith, generosity, honesty, zeal, and self-sacrifice are poetical phrases. None of these things can, in reality, be counted upon; there is no truth in man which can be used as a moving or productive power. All motive force in him is essentially brutish, covetous, or contentious. His power is only power of prey: otherwise than the spider, he cannot design; otherwise than the tiger, he cannot feed." This is the modern interpretation of that embarrassing article of the Creed, "the communion of saints."

It has always seemed very strange to me, not indeed that this creed should have been adopted, it being the entirely necessary consequence of the previous fundamental article; but that no one should ever seem to have any misgivings about it; that, practically, no one had *seen* how strong work *was* done by man; how either for hire, or for hatred, it never had been done; and that no amount of pay had ever

made a good soldier, a good teacher, a good artist, or a good workman. You pay your soldiers and sailors so many pence a day, at which rated sum, one will do good fighting for you; another, bad fighting. Pay as you will, the entire goodness of the fighting depends, always, on its being done for nothing; or rather, less than nothing, in the expectation of no pay but death. Examine the work of your spiritual teachers, and you will find the statistical law respecting them is "The less pay, the better work." Examine also your writers and artists: for ten pounds you shall have a Paradise Lost, and for a plate of figs, a Dürer drawing; but for a million of money sterling, neither. Examine your men of science: paid by starvation, Kepler will discover the laws of the orbs of heaven for you; and, driven out to die in the street, Swammerdam shall discover the laws of life for you—such hard terms do they make with you, these brutish men, who can only be had for hire.

Neither is good work ever done for hatred, any more than hire—but for love only. For love of their country, or their leader, or their duty, men fight steadily; but for massacre and plunder, feebly. Your signal, "England expects every man to do his duty," they will answer; your signal of black flag and death's head, they will not answer. And verily they will answer it no more in commerce than in battle. The cross bones will not make a good shop-sign, you will find ultimately, any more than a good battle-standard. Not the cross bones, but the cross.

Now the practical result of this infidelity in man, is the utter ignorance of all the ways of getting his right work out of him. From a given quantity of human power and intellect, to produce the least possible result, is a problem solved, nearly with mathematical precision, by the present methods of the nation's economical procedure. The power and intellect are enormous. With the best soldiers, at present existing, we survive in battle, and but survive, because, by help of Providence, a man whom we have kept all his life in command of a company forces his way at the age of seventy so far up as to obtain permission to save us, and die, unthanked. With the shrewdest thinkers in the world, we have

not yet succeeded in arriving at any national conviction respecting the uses of life. And with the best artistical material in the world, we spend millions of money in raising a building for our Houses of Talk, of the delightfulness and utility of which (perhaps roughly classing the Talk and its tabernacle together) posterity will, I believe, form no very grateful estimate—while for sheer want of bread, we brought the question to the balance of a hair, whether the most earnest of our young painters should give up his art altogether, and go to Australia, or fight his way through all neglect and obloquy to the painting of the *Christ in the Temple*.

The marketing was indeed done in this case, as in all others, on the usual terms. For the millions of money, we got a mouldering toy: for the starvation, five years' work of the prime of a noble life. Yet neither that picture, great as it is, nor any other of Hunt's, are the best he could have done. They are the least he could have done. By no expedient could we have repressed him more than he has been repressed; by no abnegation received from him less than we have received.

My dear friend and teacher, Lowell, right as he is in almost everything, is for once wrong in these lines, though with a noble wrongness:

> Disappointment's dry and bitter root,
> Envy's harsh berries, and the choking pool
> Of the world's scorn, are the right mother-milk
> To the tough hearts that pioneer their kind.

They are not so; love and trust are the only mother-milk of any man's soul. So far as he is hated and mistrusted, his powers are destroyed. Do not think that with impunity you can follow the eyeless fool, and shout with the shouting charlatan, and that the men you thrust aside with gibe and blow, are thus sneered and crushed into the best service they can do you. I have told you they *will* not serve you for pay. They *cannot* serve you for scorn. Even from Balaam, money-lover though he be, no useful prophecy is to be had for silver or gold. From Elisha, saviour of life

though he be, no saving of life—even of children's, who "know no better"—is to be got by the cry Go up, thou bald-head. No man can serve you either for purse or curse; neither kind of pay will answer. No pay is, indeed, receivable by any true man; but power is receivable by him, in the love and faith you give him. So far only as you give him these can he serve you; that is the meaning of the question which his Master asks always, "Believest thou that I am able?" And from every one of His servants—to the end of time—if you give them the Capernaum measure of faith, you shall have from them Capernaum measure of works, and no more.

Do not think that I am irreverently comparing great and small things. The system of the world is entirely one; small things and great are alike part of one mighty whole. As the flower is gnawed by frost, so every human heart is gnawed by faithlessness. And as surely—as irrevocably—as the fruit-bud falls before the east wind, so fails the power of the kindest human heart, if you meet it with poison.

Now the condition of mind in which Turner did all his great work was simply this: "What I do must be done rightly; but I know also that no man now living in Europe cares to understand it; and the better I do it, the less he will see the meaning of it." There never was yet, so far as I can hear or read, isolation of a great spirit so utterly desolate. Columbus had succeeded in making other hearts share his hope, before he was put to hardest trial; and knew that, by help of Heaven, he could finally show that he was right. Kepler and Galileo could demonstrate their conclusions up to a certain point; so far as they felt they were right, they were sure that after death their work would be acknowledged. But Turner could demonstrate nothing of what he had done; —saw no security that after death he would be understood more than he had been in life. Only another Turner could apprehend Turner. Such praise as he received was poor and superficial; he regarded it far less than censure. My own admiration of him was wild in enthusiasm, but it gave him no ray of pleasure; he could not make me at that time understand his main meanings; he loved me, but cared

nothing for what I said, and was always trying to hinder me from writing, because it gave pain to his fellow-artists. To the praise of other persons he gave not even the acknowledgment of this sad affection; it passed by him as murmur of the wind; and most justly, for not one of his own special powers was ever perceived by the world. I have said in another place that all great modern artists will own their obligation to him as a guide. They will; but they are in error in this gratitude, as I was, when I quoted it as a sign of their respect. Close analysis of the portions of modern art founded on Turner has since shown me that in every case his imitators misunderstood him—that they caught merely at superficial brilliancies, and never saw the real character of his mind or of his work.

And at this day, while I write, the catalogue allowed to be sold at the gates of the National Gallery for the instruction of the common people describes Callcott and Claude as the greater artists.

To censure, on the other hand, Turner was acutely sensitive, owing to his own natural kindness; he felt it, for himself, or for others, not as criticism, but as cruelty. He knew that however little his higher power could be seen, he had at least done as much as ought to have saved him from wanton insult; and the attacks upon him in his later years were to him not merely contemptible in their ignorance, but amazing in their ingratitude. "A man may be weak in his age," he said to me once, at the time when he felt he was dying; "but you should not tell him so."

What Turner might have done for us, had he received help and love, instead of disdain, I can hardly trust myself to imagine. Increasing calmly in power and loveliness, his work would have formed one mighty series of poems, each great as that which I have interpreted—the Hesperides; but becoming brighter and kinder as he advanced to happy age. Soft as Correggio's, solemn as Titian's, the enchanted colour would have glowed, imperishable and pure; and the subtle thoughts risen into loftiest teaching, helpful for centuries to come.

What we have asked from him, instead of this, and what

received, we know. But few of us yet know how true an image those darkening wrecks of radiance give of the shadow which gained sway at last over his once pure and noble soul.

Not unresisted, nor touching the heart's core, nor any of the old kindness and truth: yet festering work of the worm —inexplicable and terrible, such as England, by her goodly gardening, leaves to infect her earth-flowers.

So far as in it lay, this century has caused every one of its great men, whose hearts were kindest, and whose spirits most perceptive of the work of God, to die without hope: Scott, Keats, Byron, Shelley, Turner. Great England, of the Iron-heart now, not of the Lion-heart; for these souls of her children an account may perhaps be one day required of her.

She has not yet read often enough that old story of the Samaritan's mercy. He whom he saved was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho—to the accursed city (so the old Church used to understand it). He should not have left Jerusalem; it was his own fault that he went out into the desert, and fell among the thieves, and was left for dead. Every one of these English children, in their day, took the desert bypath as he did, and fell among fiends—took to making bread out of stones at their bidding, and then died, torn and famished; careful England, in her pure, priestly dress, passing by on the other side. So far as we are concerned, that is the account *we* have to give of them.[1]

So far as *they* are concerned, I do not fear for them—there being one Priest who never passes by. The longer I live, the more clearly I see how all souls are in His hand—the mean and the great. Fallen on the earth in their baseness, or fading as the mist of morning in their goodness—still in the hand of the potter as the clay, and in the temple of their master as the cloud. It was not the mere bodily death that He conquered—that death had no sting. It was

[1] It is strange that the last words Turner ever attached to a picture should have been these:

The priest held the poisoned cup.

Compare the words of 1798 with these of 1850.

this spiritual death which He conquered, so that at last it should be swallowed up—mark the word—not in life; but in victory. As the dead body shall be raised to life, so also the defeated soul to victory, if only it has been fighting on its Master's side, has made no covenant with death; nor itself bowed its forehead for his seal. Blind from the prison-house, maimed from the battle, or mad from the tombs, their souls shall surely yet sit, astonished, at His feet who giveth peace.

Who *giveth* peace? Many a peace we have made and named for ourselves, but the falsest is in that marvellous thought that we, of all generations of the earth, only know the right; and that to us, at last—and us alone—all the scheme of God, about the salvation of men, has been shown. "This is the light in which *we* are walking. Those vain Greeks are gone down to their Persephone for ever—Egypt and Assyria, Elam and her multitude—uncircumcised, their graves are round about them—Pathros and careless Ethiopia—filled with the slain. Rome, with her thirsty sword, and poison wine, how did she walk in her darkness! We only have no idolatries—ours are the seeing eyes; in our pure hands at last, the seven-sealed book is laid; to our true tongues entrusted the preaching of a perfect gospel. Who shall come after us? Is it not Peace? The poor Jew, Zimri, who slew his master, there is no peace for him: but, for us? tiara on head, may we not look out of the windows of heaven?"

Another kind of peace I look for than this, though I hear it said of me that I am hopeless.

I am not hopeless, though my hope may be as Veronese's: the dark-veiled.

Veiled, not because sorrowful, but because blind. I do not know what my England desires, or how long she will choose to do as she is doing now—with her right hand casting away the souls of men, and with her left the gifts of God.

In the prayers which she dictates to her children, she tells them to fight against the world, the flesh, and the devil. Some day, perhaps, it may also occur to her as desirable to

tell those children what she means by this. What is the world which they are to "fight with," and how does it differ from the world which they are to "get on in"? The explanation seems to me the more needful, because I do not, in the book we profess to live by, find anything very distinct about fighting with the world. I find something about fighting with the rulers of its darkness, and something also about overcoming it; but it does not follow that this conquest is to be by hostility, since evil may be overcome with good. But I find it written very distinctly that God loved the world, and that Christ is the light of it.

What the much-used words therefore, mean, I cannot tell. But this, I believe, they *should* mean. That there is, indeed, one world which is full of care, and desire, and hatred: a world of war, of which Christ is not the light, which indeed is without light, and has never heard the great "Let there be." Which is, therefore, in truth, as yet no world; but chaos, on the face of which, moving, the Spirit of God yet causes men to hope that a world will come. The better one, they call it: perhaps they might, more wisely, call it the real one. Also, I hear them speak continually of going to it, rather than of its coming to them; which, again, is strange, for in that prayer which they had straight from the lips of the Light of the world, and which He apparently thought sufficient prayer for them, there is not anything about going to another world; only something of another government coming into this; or rather, not another, but the only government—that government which will constitute it a world indeed. New heavens and new earth. Earth, no more without form and void, but sown with fruit of righteousness. Firmament, no more of passing cloud, but of cloud risen out of the crystal sea—cloud in which, as He was once received up, so He shall again come with power, and every eye shall see Him, and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of Him.

Kindreds of the earth, or tribes of it![1] the "earth begotten," the Chaos children—children of the present world, with its desolate seas, and its Medusa clouds: the

[1] Compare *Matt.* xxiv. 30.

Dragon children, merciless: they who dealt as clouds without water: serpent clouds, by whose sight men were turned into stone—the time must surely come for their wailing.

"Thy kingdom come," we are bid to ask then! But how shall it come? With power and great glory, it is written; and yet not with observation, it is also written. Strange kingdom! Yet its strangeness is renewed to us with every dawn.

When the time comes for us to wake out of the world's sleep, why should it be otherwise than out of the dreams of the night? Singing of birds, first, broken and low, as, not to dying eyes, but eyes that wake to life, "the casement slowly grows a glimmering square;" and then the grey, and then the rose of dawn; and last the light, whose going forth is to the ends of heaven.

This kingdom it is not in our power to bring; but it is, to receive. Nay, it is come already, in part; but not received, because men love chaos best; and the Night, with her daughters. That is still the only question for us, as in the old Elias days, "If ye will receive it." With pains it may be shut out still from many a dark place of cruelty; by sloth it may be still unseen for many a glorious hour. But the pain of shutting it out must grow greater and greater: harder, every day, that struggle of man with man in the abyss, and shorter wages for the fiend's work. But it is still at our choice; the simoom-dragon may still be served if we will, in the fiery desert, or else God walking in the garden, at cool of day. Coolness now, not of Hesperus over Atlas, stooped endurer of toil; but of Heosphorus over Sion, the joy of the earth.[1] The choice is no vague nor doubtful one. High on the desert mountain, full descried, sits throned the tempter, with his old promise—the kingdoms of this world, and the glory of them. He still calls you to your labour, as Christ to your rest—labour and sorrow, base desire, and cruel hope. So far as you desire to possess, rather than to give; so far as you look for power to command, instead of

[1] *Ps.* xlviii. 2. This joy it is to receive and to give, because its officers (governors of its acts) are to be Peace, and its exactors (governors of its dealings), Righteousness.—*Isa.* lx. 17.

to bless; so far as your own prosperity seems to you to issue out of contest or rivalry, of any kind, with other men, or other nations; so long as the hope before you is for supremacy instead of love; and your desire is to be greatest, instead of least—first, instead of last—so long you are serving the Lord of all that is last, and least—the last enemy that shall be destroyed, Death; and you shall have death's crown, with the worm coiled in it; and death's wages, with the worm feeding on them; kindred of the earth shall you yourself become; saying to the grave "Thou art my father," and to the worm "Thou art my mother, and my sister."

I leave you to judge, and to choose, between this labour, and the bequeathed peace; this wages, and the gift of the Morning Star; this obedience, and the doing of the will which shall enable you to claim another kindred than of the earth, and to hear another voice than that of the grave, saying, "My brother, and sister, and mother."

THE END.

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